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MORE ABOUT OUR COFFEE-ROOM

MORE ABOUT

OUR COFFEE-ROOM.

BY

ELIZABETH R. COTTON.

WITH PREFACE BY

THE EARL OF SHAFTESBURY.

Thy trust must be in Him,
If thou wouldest be at peace;
If His work is thy theme,
Thy work shall have success.

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PREFACE.

OUR forefathers lived in an age of nascent evils, which they neither saw nor heard. We are living in an age of remedies. But the evils are now fullgrown and lusty, while the remedies are young and feeble.

It is, however, matter of thankfulness that such curative efforts are on foot, and that many minds and many hearts are engaged in battling with the Goliaths of iniquity and mischief, that stand in the way of all progress towards good.

The remedies proposed are theoretical and practical. The theoretical are noisy and specious, and occupy a great deal of public attention, with a vast expenditure of voice and paper. The practical, wise as many of them are, in principle and object, are yet but tentative, and require much experience, and much combination of

... all the ... at some general ... and purposes, of the ... .

... must be, in the present state of ... and various, not only on a great scale, but ... in the same or kindred departments of activity. ... circumstances must be considered, and no less the ... character and disposition of the people addressed; ... peculiarities they have, with as distinct natural history as birds, beasts, or fishes. There are habits of long-standing in special districts of wide or contracted ..., small traditions, individual fancies, feelings that ... neither be defined nor accounted for; bigotries and ... superstitions, as they may be called, but all of them, ... must be ascertained and appreciated; nor ... may be treated lightly by those who desire either a ... or a permanent success. Things, for instance, ... would do in Scotland, will not at once be accepted ... England, and *vice versa*. Town and country have ... own social arrangements. Trades, callings, ... have their distinctive thoughts and ... which no one who enters on this special ... can force or overlook.

These general statements are applicable to the objects of all such efforts as those which are set out in the book before us—cafès, coffee-houses, cocoa-houses, refreshment rooms, and British workmen's public-house (by whatever name they may be called) are acknowledged to be highly beneficial, and, indeed, a great necessity. They are founded, we believe, with one common purpose—a purpose to reclaim people from indulgence in intoxicating drinks; to raise their notions of social life; to rescue them from temptation, and put them in the way of attaining the highest good.

The leaders of these movements being voluntary and independent agents, subject to no central authority, and free from any but self-imposed discipline, are a law unto themselves. Their action in such a variety of circumstances will inevitably reflect the variety of the circumstances by which they are surrounded. Their judgment as to reasons and methods will oftentimes differ in many details from their co-workers in the same class. But we must not, before we have ascertained the reason of such differences, be in haste to condemn their schemes as ill-conceived, or inefficient. Some would so conduct the institutions as to give them much the character of places of worship. Well, let their efforts

be respected and encouraged. Some would treat them as places of innocent recreation, adding thereto lectures, Bible-classes, Sunday services, and week-day amusements. Some are content to hold out counter-attractions to the gin-palace, to wean people from their degrading ways, and so lay the foundation for individual progress, and a general improvement of the whole surface of society.

Some will reply, "But this is not enough," nor do we say that it is, but we say that it is as much as can, in many instances, be obtained; and the peace and decency of society are not of so small account in the prospects of mankind, as to be altogether unworthy of our care and consideration.

Doubtless the higher the standard, the greater will be the efforts to reach the summit. And here we must speak in terms of the warmest praise of the "Sayings and Doings" set out in the narration of the following pages. The pious, amiable, and accomplished young lady whose efforts are therein recorded, has given an example of what may be done by the exertions, though but of one person, founded on an intense love of the gospel, and a burning desire to convey it to the souls of *others*. *Every one* who reads her achievements cannot

but rejoice in the harvest she has reaped, must see the harvest that is yet to be reaped, and ought to feel stirred up to make at least an individual effort, that the labourers therein may not be few.

Old people can pray and give advice, though their advice is not often accepted. Young people can pray, labour, and influence others; but whether it be the old who give advice, or the young who labour, no time is to be lost. They must talk, and they must work, "while it is called to-day;" and thus Her Majesty may yet, by God's blessing, reign over a wise and an understanding people.

CONTENTS.

PAGE

CHAPTER I.

A FATHER'S BLESSING 1

CHAPTER II.

OUR COFFEE-ROOM IN THE CAMP 15

CHAPTER III.

HARVEST INGATHERINGS 55

CHAPTER IV.

LOVING-KINDNESSES AND TENDER MERCIES . . 81

CHAPTER V.

OUR COFFEE-STALL 97

CHAPTER VI.

TEMPERANCE 117

CHAPTER VII.

ANOTHER RAILWAY GUARD 137

PAGE

CHAPTER VIII.

THE COTTAGE HOSPITAL 157

CHAPTER IX.

OUR MEETINGS 171

CHAPTER X.

OUR WEEK EVENINGS 201

CHAPTER XI.

QUESTIONS ANSWERED 221

CHAPTER I.

"A Father's Blessing!"

Where the Lord is, there is blessing—
There no curse can be.
What must be that pure rejoicing?
Brother! sister! "Come and see."

Where the Lord is there is sweetness—
None can love as He!
How can He love such as we are?
Sinner! sinner! "Come and see."

"Long and dark" the way appeareth,
Yet no fear have *we*.
We remember how He called us,
Saying, "Children," "Come and see."

"A FATHER'S BLESSING!" With these words we finished a previous simple record of prayers heard and answered—of humble efforts made in ANOTHER'S almighty strength, of souls once in total darkness, but now "translated into the kingdom of light."

We BLESS HIS HOLY NAME, that we may continue through time to unfold fresh pages of testimony to the Lord's willingness to save, His unfailing love, of promises *made our own*, through *simple faith* in the NAME of JESUS. This name, being an infinite name, is our title to unlimited blessing. Oh, let us use it *more* as our plea!

In addition to the two rooms with which we first started work at the town hall nearly two years ago, we have now a couple of smaller rooms, opening out from our large coffee-room; the first of these is called the "reading-room," as here the men may enjoy their books, or write their

letters undisturbed by the many voices and footsteps of the first apartment. But the next door reveals a much smaller space—ten feet by ten—nicely carpeted and seated, a round table in the middle, gas burning overhead; and this is our mainspring of action! I call it the "mainspring," because it is the centre, and the most important part of all our work. Here the little prayer-meetings are held almost daily by the working-men themselves, and sometimes carried on till a late hour at night; here they pour out their hearts, often so full of care, beset with temptations, and oh! so needing the grace offered from above. Here too, thank God, they gain the *answers*. From this little room they go forth refreshed, "strengthened with might by the Spirit in the inner man." THIS is the remedy, and surely the ONLY *true and lasting* one for all evils. By humble, believing prayer, we enter the very stronghold provided for us; here let us abide. A better can never be found; and while inscriptions of PRAISE may be written over every work thus dedicated to His glory, and to His alone, how often might the *tombstone* of *failure* have, as its God-spoken epitaph, the terrible words, "Lo, they have rejected the word of the Lord, and what wisdom is in them!" Philanthropic efforts, buried—*one heap of ruin*—under disconsolate repinings

against either the ingratitude of man, or want of success expected; or else, perhaps, what is still more melancholy to hear, though as common, the shallow, boastful utterances, "We have done well, as well as could be expected." Whereas, *what* are the results? Are fresh souls gathered into the Lord's own fold? *saved* from sin and wrath? made blessedly happy (*and this in large numbers*) in their own hearts, and in their homes? Is the work substantial, increasing, ALMIGHTY? or is there a mere outward improvement in a few? Perhaps not even that.

Oh, let us be more earnest about the HEAVENLY "TAKINGS" in our rooms!

On the other hand, one cannot but express unbounded gratitude to the Lord for the manner in which the working-people are now being *considered* (Psalm xli. 1) all over the world. In England, the Coffee-Room movement seems to be making great progress, though unfortunately with two very different lines of procedure. These are so well stated in two letters I received by the same post this morning, that I am tempted to give them in full, trusting the comparison may be of use to some wavering minds.

The first is from one who is a stranger to myself, except through a short, recent correspondence. It begins thus:—

"I read your book with much interest; but it seems to me that your coffee-room grew out of your previous religious work; whereas our soldiers' coffee-room is for a distinctly secular purpose, though we hope other agencies in connection with it may be made useful to the men in a religious way. I have sent out a refreshment tent to soldiers when in camp, and know how gladly, under those circumstances, even hard-drinking men flock to it; so that the canteen is nearly emptied. The soldiers are most grateful for any personal kindness, and especially for interest shewn by ladies; but, like all hard-drinking and uneducated men, they are very excitable and impressionable, and need to be very carefully dealt with. Any form of religious excitement may attract a certain number; but when the external influence is removed, they too often return to lives of open sin, and bring dishonour on the name of Christian. The steadier and more intelligent men are as little disposed to have religion forced upon them, as people are in a higher grade of society." . . .

The other letter was brought me, I am sure, by the same post, as a sweet antidote to the bitter pain caused me by the first. The writer says:—

"Lord Cairns made a very nice speech at the *opening of* the coffee-room here. You may have

heard of it, or seen it in the *Times*. The *tone* was, the uselessness of endeavouring to cure the disease of intemperance through the mind. The only way—through the *heart*, and that by the LOVE OF JESUS."

Thank God for such a testimony! Why should not every Christian uphold it by word and work? Were this done with a singleness of purpose—alas! almost *unknown* amongst us—what bursts of praise would ring their note of victory throughout our mourning and lamenting Church and world, causing the very vaults of heaven to ring with the news that *many* repentant sinners were being welcomed back to the Father's home!

Surely Christian workers should not be compelled by a questioning world to write only from their own experience, of the ways and means by which their work may be made successful. When we have a Scripture basis, Scripture experience, Scripture precept, and whole volumes of Church history, both public and private, to fall back upon for our study, surely one individual's practical experience of any special branch of work should be simply welcomed as an additional mark of the *present* grace of our God. In comparing different methods of reaching the same desired end, we commonly hear it said, "There was some difference in opinion;" or, "We do not quite agree

as to the position that ought to be maintained at first." In allusion to these coffee-rooms, this is a most common remark, "We are afraid that if so decided an attitude is held at first, *we shall drive the men away!*" *Could* there be a greater fallacy? *Can* there be a greater mistake? If by a "decided attitude" we mean a distinct "holding forth of the word of life"—a daily advertisement, in our coffee-room assembly, of the love of Christ—how can the precious souls we desire to reclaim be driven away by HIM? It seems to me incredible that those who dwell in our Christian country should for a moment imagine that failure must result from pointing out Him, who is "the Way, the Truth, and the Life." But so it is.

A clergyman who visited our rooms lately, and inquired most particularly into all our plans, rules, &c., told me he was just going to open similar rooms himself. He has done so; and this week he is having theatricals to attract men to the place! Will the "play" attract these poor men to the LORD JESUS? and who else can save them from SIN and SORROW?

A man who has been a sceptic, and a very determined promoter of such views, came into our coffee-room on the last Saturday night of the old year. He came to read the papers, a perfect *stranger to* myself, and indeed, I believe, to nearly

all in the room. At half-past nine I took up the Bible to read a verse out of the 39th Psalm, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am." In commenting on it, I said, "It is a common thing in trade to square up accounts at the close of the old year. Debts ought to be paid, crooked things made straight. Are you ready to listen to God's reckoning with you to-night? Is everything 'square' and 'straightforward' between you and the Lord? Has He forgiven you all your sins, and made you ready for heaven by his precious blood shed on the cross for *you?*" and a few words further to the same effect. The book was closed, and we asked the Lord's forgiveness for the sins of the past year, that He would remedy all mistakes we had made, and give us all renewed blessings for the future.

The unbeliever's heart was touched. He went away annoyed, distressed, uncomfortable. And well he might! He had heard GOD'S thoughts about him; and he could get no rest. "I did not know there was to be prayers," he said.

The Lord had loved him better than he loved himself.

The next evening, by some strange attraction, he came to the meetings held in the large room. There his anxiety only increased. It was not

until six weeks after that I knew anything about him, though during this time he had been constantly at the rooms. He began to attend the Bible class. (He would never have reached the Bible class had he not heard the Scripture in the public room.) And then I was asked to speak to him. I did so; and shall I ever forget that conversation?

He said, "I have preached in the streets. Yes! I have taken the very texts you take, and taken them ALL WRONG! I can't bear to talk about it. I couldn't tell you. No!" Then he quoted some of the verses, breathing of hope, and peace, and love, which had been the "texts" for his "blasphemy," as he now called it, with grief and shame.

"But," he kept repeating, "I *thank* GOD for these coffee-rooms! If ever I am a hundred miles away, I shall never forget you, and I shall always pray for you."

"But tell me," I asked, "what brought you to these rooms on that Saturday night?"

His answer was, "I heard it was a nice place, so I came; but I did not know there was any prayers, or Bible-reading. If I had known, perhaps, I should never have come."

"Then I should like to tell you an argument *that many* people are using at present with

respect to these coffee-rooms. They say, '*Do not* read the Bible, or speak to the men about the Saviour, or offer prayers in the public rooms, for fear of giving offence, and keeping away the very men you want to reach.' What is your answer to that?"

He replied, with great solemnity and earnestness, "'There is joy in heaven over *one* sinner that repenteth, more than over ninety and nine just persons who need no repentance.' If you secure the 'ninety and nine,' and lose the '*one*,' you lose the gladness of heaven, and *you lose* ALL THE BLESSING. You lose joy for yourself too, and you lose the happiness of the repenting sinner."

He said more to the same effect; burning words of reality springing from a new-born life.

"I thank God you *do* read the Bible in the coffee-rooms," he continued, "that I do with all my heart."

"But do you think," I said, "it drives the men away? Look at the large numbers in constant attendance, and at the crowds of strangers whom we don't even know by sight."

"No," he replied, "it does not drive them away. It *attracts them strongly*." He then asked for books and tracts to distribute, saying he would like to give his *life* to such work; adding, what was very evident from the whole tone of his con-

versation, that he was searching his Bible diligently.

"I made my wife an infidel," he said, "and that fills me with remorse. She is gone now; she died some time ago, but I thank God she offered a prayer before she died."

My friend had said, "Had he known there were prayers," as he expressed it, "he would not have come." I believe this to be the case in many instances; or, if our custom *is* known, that it is determined by these poor fellows to go out before the reading begins; but not so—the LORD brings them to the rooms, and HE causes them to hear the Scripture; HE also blesses the words to their hearts.

On the other hand, I believe many are drawn by the novelty of such loving words. "All bare Him witness, and wondered at the gracious words which proceeded out of His mouth. . . . . They were astonished at His doctrine, for His word was with POWER." . . . . "He taught them as one that *had authority*, and not as the scribes."

Is not the same gracious Saviour a present, living Friend? Is he not "the SAME, yesterday, to-day, and for ever"? And is not His power Almighty now as it was then — "mighty to the pulling down of strongholds." We cannot "pull *down* "*these* "strongholds" ourselves, but we can

bring them face to face with ONE who wields an unerring "sword," even His "word . . . quick . . . powerful . . . sharp . . . piercing . . . discerning the very thoughts and intents of the heart." That word is powerful also in its "healing," renovating might (Heb. iv. 12; 1 Pet. i. 22, 23). We simply read the Word, HE does the work. We are passive mediums in His hand. HE reforms the people through the appointed means, and by the only remedy provided for sinful man, namely, His grace, and that administered through His word.

"By grace are ye saved, through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God."

"Faith cometh by hearing; and hearing by the word of God."

CHAPTER II.

Our Coffee-Room in the Camp.

Go and toil in any vineyard,
Do not fear to do or dare;
If you want a field of labour,
You can find it anywhere.

"OUR Coffee-Room in the Camp!" A warlike title, indeed! Yes, my reader; and none so surprised at the words as myself. I little thought a short time ago that I should to-day be penning such words as these. But I will tell you how it came to pass.

This report one day—more strange than credible, we were sure—reached us in our quiet little town: "A large body of troops are to be quartered on the Common for a short time." This rumour passed through various phases of descriptive interest, as it was echoed from mouth to mouth, until it gradually took more definite shape; and we knew, as an ascertained fact, that some regiments of Scotch and Irish militia were coming, in pursuance of the mobilization scheme, to be encamped within a couple of miles of our

town. Having been absent from home for a week or two, I was returning on the first Friday in July, when I received most pressing letters from a lady, requesting that I would go to her house, and speak to some militia-men who were spending their evenings in a large room which she had provided for them in the town where they were quartered. They were English militia, and must be disbanded the following week. With much difficulty I contrived the visit, but it was one of great interest to me. In the first place, my friend much puzzled me by her answers to my questions as to the time of the meeting. "At what hour will these men assemble?" I asked. "They are now assembled," she said, "and they will be there all the evening." "But at what time do you wish me to talk to them?" "Oh, at any time!" was again her reply; "the sooner you come down the better." It was now about half-past six o'clock. At seven we repaired to the spot, and here, I must say, I was astonished at the sight I beheld. In a small narrow street of rather tumble-down looking houses, my guide suddenly opened a door, when I found myself in a very large low-roofed room, of the very roughest appearance; daylight could be seen through various loopholes in the roof and walls; *the furniture was* composed of long deal tables,

which were surrounded by rows of chairs. This room was, I cannot say *filled*, but *densely crowded* with red-coats. So packed was it, that it was only with difficulty we could move, once having had the door shut behind us. "What is the matter?" I innocently asked; "what are they all doing?" But no one had time to answer my questions, so I was obliged to find all the information I could for myself. It appeared that this room had been opened nightly for these poor fellows from six till ten o'clock, and had been filled in this manner during the whole of their stay in the town, namely, ten weeks. No refreshments were served, except bottles of ginger-beer at a half-penny; but in this room these men might read, write, learn arithmetic, look at pictures, or in fact amuse themselves in any way they best could, the evening being, I think, generally closed with a meeting. But so strongly was the place evidently appreciated by them, that I noticed the very moment a chair happened to be left vacant by one red-coat, another would rush in from the doorway to occupy it. Young ladies played the piano, and occasionally sang hymns, and at half-past eight I was asked to speak to them. Instinct told one that the commencement must be quite *conversational;* for that any alarm of an address, or approach to a Bible-reading, might frighten away many of those

who were present. But I am thankful to say, in answer to our earnest prayer, the crowds remained listening in perfect silence, and with solemn attention, to the simple words of invitation given them from the blessed Book of Life. At the close, we had one or two hymns, and some of the men wished for a private talk. This of course, in each case, was a felt need of personal encouragement; for if, in our positions of comparative ease and comfort, we need daily to pray, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil!" how much more are these men exposed to every phase of difficulty, and every form of sin and want; and how much more, too, must they need our fulfilment, in relation to themselves, of the command, "Bear ye one another's burdens"! Our interesting evening now closed, but my eyes had once more been opened to behold a vast need, and my soul had been drawn to cry out, "'Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do,' for the troops now expected in our own neighbourhood!"

On Saturday morning G—— was the recipient of my new thoughts, and, as usual, entered very quietly but very sympathisingly into the elements of my scheme. "Yes, Miss, I think it might be done," he said; but I think it was rather with a sigh he said it, for with our own regular work *our hands had* always appeared as full as they

could well be. However, we had not conversed very long on the subject before G—— was as warm as myself. Our funds were by no means in a Californian condition. "Sufficient," according to the promise, we had always had, but at this moment we could not boast the wherewithal to "lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes." Soon a light shined on our path, which I would describe in detail, were not kind friends involved in the removal of our preliminary difficulties.

On the Monday morning I received a most kind invitation to breakfast with the vicar of the parish. At his house I met the Scripture-reader who had been engaged for the camp. After some conversation, we all drove to the Common, to look at the place we had thought desirable for the erection of our wooden building. Here we met one of the officers of the Army Service Corps. He also was most kind in giving us permission to settle ourselves "beside the pump, and near the roadside," which locality was the acme of our ambition. Here we all stood in consultation—the vicar, the officer, the carpenter, G——, and I; and then a blessing was asked on our proposed scheme.

On Monday evening a wonderful building was seen rising on the Common, which I can only compare in shape to a Noah's ark, or a tallow

factory in Australia. There it grew, composed of rough planks nailed together, and covered in with a zinc roof; the size about sixty feet by thirty. By this last figure, my reader, I beg you not to take example, should you be planning a similar work; for we very soon found, as I had said prophetically at first, the dimensions of our shed were far too small. The tables and forms which were ranged round them consisted also of planks fastened securely on stumps of wood which were well driven into the ground, our carpet being no other than the green grass of the Common, which after the first night of our militia levee, was trodden into a dark brown floor. Our boarded walls were decorated with coloured pictures (from the Tract Society's Depôt), wall pictures from the *British Workman*, and large almanacks, besides large texts made of bright blue paper letters pasted on white glazed calico. The tables were covered with books, papers, and games.

At last all was ready, and we were listening eagerly for the arrival of our Scotch friends.

Soon the musical notes of the bagpipe, fife, and drum, were heard heralding the approach of the expected forces. Then other bands were heard in the distance, and in a short time we beheld on our *quiet Common the* unwonted sight of two or three

thousand men marching to their spirited Scotch airs, and arrayed in Scotch glengarrys, white and red jackets, and tartan trowsers. In a very short space of time hundreds of little white tents were seen springing up, amidst the gorse and furze, in every direction, and a beautiful camp was formed. Our quiet Surrey folks were amazed. They said, "It's just like a dream!" They could hardly realise this sudden transformation of the well-known Common from being the pleasure-ground of geese, cows, and goats, into a living, moving colony of human beings. And "such funny folk too!" as they commented: "I heard one of 'em speak, and I tell you, Miss, I couldn't understand a word he said!" The northern accents certainly must have sounded like a foreign tongue amongst them; but to us they were welcome, for they brought freshly to one's thoughts the "bens" and "braes" and "lochs," which have so often afforded a refreshment in hours of weariness, that our lowland plains could never have brought.

The next two hours seemed very long, while we waited to see whether our Noah's ark would find favour in the sight of the "Scotch army." G—— and I being but civilians after all, generally called our new friends "the army."

While we were waiting, there came a message from head-quarters, to say that the General would

come to the opening of our shed in the evening. This most welcome intimation was an unexpected honour.

In the course of the evening the General arrived with some of his staff, spoke kindly to the men as to the advantage of a room of this description, urging them to spend their spare hours profitably, concluding with some encouraging and hearty words to ourselves. One of the chief officers of the staff visited this place almost daily, often himself addressing the men, and always shewing the greatest kindness to us, and helping us in every possible way.

At last the bugle sounded a call, which signified, as we afterwards knew, permission to leave the camp; the bounds of which, however, were very strict, reaching, I think, a mile on either side, and not including the town. Soon a moving mass of variegated hues was seen over the crest of rising ground, which separated the centre of the camp from our view, and in a few moments the Scotch voices told us that our work had begun. In a very few moments our Noah's ark was quite full, and poor G—— was bewildered by strange requests which he could not comprehend, nor when translated, could he gratify.

"Have you any *whuskey*, sir?" was the first *demand*.

"Nothing of the sort, man," said another, "it isn't that kind of place."

The next request was a "Scotch newspaper;" this necessary we had left unprovided, which I confess was an act of carelessness quite unpardonable on my part.

"*The Ayr Advertiser! The Glasgow Herald!*" they shouted. In vain we offered the *Times*, the *Standard, Daily News*. They shook their heads, and turned away.

"How is this?" I said, by way of making the best of our difficulty; "you have only just left Scotland, you cannot want to hear the news so soon."

With gravest and most earnest looks they said, in their slow way, "*Four days* we have been on the sea, and we have heard no tidings."

Home-sick already, poor dear fellows! and I had no Scotch news for them. We telegraphed for a dozen different papers to be sent daily during the time of their visit; and when these came they were happy.

The next request was put to me by a nice-looking young fellow. "Would ye write a letter for me?" "Oh yes, you'll write for him," chimed in another; "he's wanting to send a letter off the noo."

"Very well," I replied, and subsided into a seat, "Who is it to?"

The two men smiled naively at one another, and made no reply.

"How am I to begin," I continued.

"Oh," said the first, "it's just to Caroline!"

"That's his sweetheart," chimed in the friend; "just put 'My dear Caroline.' Is'nt that what you would wish?" turning inquiringly to the dictator of the letter.

"Oh yes!" was the reply, "that'll do fine."

"That is very nice," I said, "for a beginning. Now go on, and say anything you like to her. I will write it all down for you. Why, she must be longing to hear from you."

This encouraged him, and so he proceeded, and at last became so fluent, that his friend found his presence unnecessary, and retired from the scene. I wish I could give the letter *verbatim*, but it was to this effect:

"My dear Caroline,—I hope this finds you better than it leaves me at present. We had a most tumultuous voyage lasting four days and four nights. We were exposed to the elements. The men suffered more than I can tell you from illness at sea, and none suffered more than your faithful H——. It is a fearful thing to be out on the ocean away from those you love."

"Are you not going to tell Caroline you don't *forget her?*" I suggested.

"Oh ay! she knows that *well*," he replied, and continued his letter.

"We arrived here this afternoon at our destination at three o'clock; and I lose no time in informing you of our safe arrival.

"But, dear Caroline, we are in a desolate place, and in a barbarous land. We lie all among the whins, and just on the earth. It's sair, and different from oor ain land. The heat too is very great. I never experienced anything like it before. The place would not be so desolate if you were here, dear Caroline."

And with this tender touch the letter was to be concluded, when I complained that the tone of our letter was too melancholy, and that "it would make Caroline unhappy." "Do let me write something cheerful," I said. "Shall we tell her what a beautiful wooden room there is on the Common, and how many kind friends you have amongst you?"

"Well! *you* may tell her that," replied the young man.

"And may I send her a text?" I asked.

"Oh yes; it will do her no harm," he replied.

So a text was added, and we then had to discuss the best method of closing our epistle. Was it to be "faithfully," "truly," or "sincerely?" We fixed on some appropriate word, and the

letter was brought to a termination, sealed, and addressed—a little book being enclosed in the envelope. For this little service many grateful thanks were tendered by the correspondent, accompanied by an offer of "twa bawbees," which he entreated me to accept in return for my "great kindness." I told him he would soon find out that whenever he entered this wooden room he was amongst friends, and that we should be only too pleased to render him any service that lay in our power.

My employment as scribe had already brought me a great many eager applicants—"A letter for me, please!" "Would ye be so kind as send a letter home for *me?*" "My wife! if ye please, she'll be wanting to hear." "My mother, I want to send her twa shillings."

Ink-bottles, pens, paper, stamps, were in immense requisition all over the room; and soon our post-office, which consisted of a tin biscuit-box fastened up on the wall, and having a hole cut in its lid, was quite full, and needed to be emptied for the reception of a fresh supply of letters. A number of kind friends were with us every night writing letters, selling writing materials, and performing a variety of kind offices.

At eight o'clock a hymn was proposed, and I

mounted to a small rostrum about a foot high, on which the harmonium was placed, and offered hymn-books to the men now standing and sitting in groups all round. I began to play the tune—

"Ho! my comrades, see the signal,"

but very few of our party evidently could join in it. At the end of the first verse I asked why they did not all sing. They shouted out, "Give us a Scotch psalm; we can all sing that." "The Old Hundredth!" said another, quoting the first line, "All people that on earth do dwell." Another moment, and a strong young voice had started the tune, which was soon heartily joined in by all the other men; while from this time the voluntary precentors became our acknowledged helpers in various ways, and retained their office during the month they were with us.

After the psalm had been sung, I offered to teach them "Hold the Fort," to which they readily agreed; and very soon they were all singing it quite heartily. Most attentively they listened to a few words about the dangers and temptations here, the journey through life, the great Captain's loving power in defending His children from evil, and the happy home now being prepared for those who love and follow that gracious Saviour. Then we sang,

"There is a gate that stands ajar;"

and so the proceedings of the evening were to terminate. But the men were enthusiastic in their thanks, and wanted to "shake hands" before going back to their tents.

One young fellow said, "I just trembled when I left home for fear of the drink. I did not want to take the whisky, and I told my friends so. But I thocht there wud be no other place for me to go in the evening time but the beer-houses. And I prayed richt earnest, I did, that I micht be keepit frae harm; and as I was passing over yon green I heard the singing and I came in, and your words have done my heart good the nicht." Here I received such a grip of gratitude that I felt we had at least one fast friend amongst the strangers. Many were the testimonies of gratitude the first night. On the second night we were overwhelmed!

G—— had provided a dainty, which he declares is a speciality of his — a kind of heavy, cold pudding, interspersed with large currants, and sold at a penny a slice. (A slice, to all appearance, means a very substantial and satisfying portion for those who can partake of it.) Some of this appeared on the counter, and was hailed by loud shouts of delight. "Eh! the plum-duff! the plum-duff!" they cried. "Gie us a bit! gie us a bit! Tak' the bawbee, and gie us the duff!"

The clamour was so tremendous that I thought

there was going to be a riot. They climbed over each other's shoulders, they wrestled and struggled past one another to reach the counter; while the fortunate man who gained a slice walked off enjoying his treat with unmistakeable delight. My fears were only allayed by the placid smile which rested on G——'s countenance while he served out his dainties amidst all this uproar.

"What was the matter?" I asked afterwards.

"It was only that I had not quite enough of that pudding for them; they all took such a fancy to it," he said.

The next evening he had provided a great deal more, but still there was not enough, and so a similar clamour ensued. Indeed, we had neither room nor pudding sufficient for these most appreciative men.

We had to do what has been my business ever since I first began to obey the good Master, "to lengthen our cords and strengthen our stakes." Half the wall of the room was removed, and placed about thirty feet further off, a temporary roof of tarpaulin being stretched overhead. The Army Service Corps, who were always the kindest of friends to us, lent us two beautiful little tents, which were pitched just outside our rough doorway. A friend lent us a third, and we had a fourth, which we used for a kitchen. We could

now accommodate nearly four hundred men, "outside and in," as an Irishman might say. But our tabernacle might have been three times the size, so much was it frequented.

A flag, bearing the inscription, "Refreshment and Reading Room," waved in the breeze at one end of our establishment, while a Union Jack decorated the other.

The heat was intense and continued; but we were kept diligently at our post by the tender command, so much in keeping with the rest of the will of God revealed to us in His precious word, "LOVE YE THE STRANGER." When we remember that HE was a stranger once for our sakes, and too often a "stranger" now amongst those for whom He *died*, having given up His precious life that they might live, we could not but obey His command in trying to shew kindness to the men who had so suddenly come amongst us, and who were so warmly responsive to the efforts made for them.

Much larger quantities of G——'s "plum-duff" were provided by his indefatigable hands. Indeed, the demand for it had become so wild and clamorous, and the crowds of applicants so tremendous, that I had, in the anxiety of the moment, one evening told our Scotch friends *there would* be "NO MORE PLUM-DUFF," because

they made "as much noise about it as if they were schoolboys!" G——, however, who is generally very quiet and grave in his demeanour, now shouted at the top of his voice, "WE WILL MAKE THREE TIMES AS MUCH TO-MORROW!" and the applause was immense. We never had any more riots. There was always plenty of "plum-duff," and G—— always had plenty of eager applicants to purchase it.

We had a motley throng to deal with; but, notwithstanding the severe heat, and the densely-crowded state of the room, universal good temper prevailed. Nothing painful occurred; there were no quarrels, and the only complaint ever made was the one we are too well accustomed to hear: "We wish the place had been larger" (the *place* signifying our "Noah's ark").

What *unlimited* work might be done had one only a wealth of funds at hand! Our friends say to us, in their kind and valued sympathy, "Why don't you tell *me* when you are in want of money?" little knowing as they say it, the impossibility there is of breathing these things into any human ear—little knowing, too, how many times a work is *sacrificed*, an opening lost, because we could not feel it our right to unlock the purse of our neighbour, or infringe on the possessions of

those whose right it was to bestow or to withhold. Our only course therefore was a simple obedience to the command given in Psa. lxii. 8, "POUR OUT YOUR HEARTS BEFORE HIM."

A moment's consideration would shew that these poor men's pennies could not pay all the expenses attached to such a work; nor at any time, or in any branch of mission labour, can the *pennies paid for food*—HOWEVER GOOD THE SALES MAY BE, considering the low rate of charge—support an entire building, several servants, with price of newspapers, books, &c. At the railway stations sixpence is charged for one cup of coffee, the other prices in proportion; at our wooden building, and in our town hall coffee-room, ONE PENNY only being the charge. It cannot be expected, therefore, that mission work in its varied departments could be furnished from such a source. With good management there is considerable profit, even from this low scale of prices, sufficient to defray some of the most necessary expenses of the labour involved, by even a most humble attempt to satisfy the wants of the people.

Our FAITH in the GREAT GIVER must have no limit, or we shall succumb. Thank God, He who is the "AUTHOR and FINISHER of our faith" is an *INFINITE ONE!*

THANKSGIVING FOR THE PAST,
FAITH FOR THE PRESENT,
HOPE FOR THE FUTURE,

and we have a "threefold cord" of union with the golden storehouse of "riches in glory BY CHRIST JESUS."

If it be true that we have "joined ourselves to the Lord," shall we ever say, "I am a dry tree"? "In Him all fulness dwells."

When the hungry and weary multitudes were thronging the footsteps of our Lord and His disciples in the desert, having in their eagerness, by this mighty pressure of demand on His healing power, His teaching, and His sympathy, deprived the little band of their much needed rest, the disciples shewed their human nature by the petulant suggestion, "SEND THEM AWAY into the towns and villages, that they may buy bread." He answers, "GIVE YE THEM TO EAT." A twofold lack of wisdom had pervaded their speech; a folly which too often finds its echo in the world—yes! and in the Church, amongst the *followers* of the Lord! It is strange that even in the present day when the Sun of Righteousness, *then* in His early dawn, *now* has reached His almost meridian height, and "in His light we are *seeing* light," that even now this "send away" Christianity, this false philanthropy, should have its numerous partisans.

The judge, the magistrate, the gentleman in his high-born views of right and wrong, the lady in her life of luxurious ease, all urge silently or confessedly the same advice; and can we wonder? The judge, in upholding the righteous laws of our country, condemns the offender to banishment or to prison. The gentleman and the lady are satisfied with their easy and sheltered life, well content to have the subject of *evil* in its various forms banished from their pleasant drawing-room. If the butler or the footman has been drinking, he is dismissed, or perhaps the offence is condoned with a smile, and the words, "they *will* drink, you can't help it!" But no one offers living water, heavenly bread. "I haven't *a gift!*" the lady says, as she replaces her feet on the fender, and finishes her novel.

With those who have never received themselves the "GIFT OF ETERNAL LIFE" so freely offered to all, both rich and poor, we cannot wonder there is no desire to carry the offers of life to the perishing ones. "Send them away," is the natural expression of a self-pleasing life. But when those who are the Lord's own people begin to join in the same counsel, and tell us it is not wise and well for certain classes of people to have the ONE SAVIOUR, JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD, brought prominently or directly before them, but that every

other means must rather be adopted to check the power of sin in their hearts, to satisfy their weary longings, to change them from bad men to good, shall we not wonder and say, "How long, O Lord!" Will His long-suffering know no bounds?

How quickly the disciples' mistake was rectified by words from His gracious lips! A twofold mistake. How could the fainting masses ever reach the towns and villages in their present helpless state? If they *had* succeeded in reaching them, what town or village could meet so great an emergency? Seven thousand starving people arriving at sunset! What number of baker's shops could satisfy their demand? This was man's advice. It was the advice of Christians.

But the Lord had uttered His command, so full of power, so full of compassion: "They need not depart; give ye them to eat." And now another suggestion was made, which implied a doubt as to the possibility of obedience. "From WHENCE can a man satisfy these men with bread HERE in the wilderness?" (Mark viii. 4.) "Shall we GO AND BUY two hundred pennyworth of bread, and give them to eat?" (Mark vi. 37.)

The Lord saw the people fainting, hungering. He could not be satisfied with these vague replies to His gracious love—the people must be fed.

There was immediate pressure, and this glorious One had boundless resources at His immediate command. In His very look—in His hand—there stood a fountain of infinite power. Man's unbelief might have forfeited its display, but no! that look of need, want, dependence, had penetrated the heart of Him who can be touched with the "*feeling* of our infirmities," and the stream of gifts from Himself was to gush forth in satisfying bounty—*bounty*, not only towards those who had spoken of the need, but for those also for whom they had pleaded. There are those who never pray for themselves; shall we not pray for them?

And now HE must see the poverty. HIS eyes must rest on that small handful of food. It shall be utilized; nothing wasted. He will take it in HIS hands, gaze upon it with HIS all-searching eyes, call down blessings on it with HIS omnipotent lips. The scene is changed. When JESUS is master, "all is well." When Solomon reigns, all is prosperous. When our Joseph holds the storehouse key, there is PLENTY in the hand of the waiting, looking ones. No longer *poverty*, but PLENTY.

"Make them sit down." "And he commanded them to make ALL sit down by companies on the *green grass.*"

There was no command to erect a magnificent building before His power could be displayed. It was an open-air service—one of many He held. The carpet made by the Creator was to be their resting-place. Could any artificial work of man compete with GOD'S WORK, "the green grass." How simple! but how teaching! There in perfect order all was arranged. "They sat down in companies, by fifties."

Then liberally the food was supplied. How astonished the incredulous disciples must have been as they began to distribute to the multitudes, emptying their own handfuls, and ever returning to the GIVING ONE, always receiving a fresh and abundant supply! They were learning to know the source of all fulness. Quickly threading their way amongst the hungry ones, quickly returning to the Master, receiving afresh, and joyfully returning to their work! What a happy scene! And the MULTITUDES WERE BEING FED. Poor weary ones! they have found rest at last. Poor hungry souls! they have found a satisfying portion. The poverty of saint and sinner alike has been brought into contact with the fulness of the Immortal, the Divine, in the *person* of JESUS CHRIST; and there is immediate sufficiency. There WERE "five loaves and two small fishes"—there ARE "twelve baskets full" of the fragments

that remain; and "seven thousand people" have been fed.

This is the day of mercy. The Lord's word is not, "Depart," but "Come."

Which word shall we utter? The one is man's word, the other God's word. The one, a talisman for evil; the other, a talisman for good. The one, the false utterance of our own unbelieving hearts; the other, the sentence that carries with it the miraculous success of the "grain" of faith, "removing mountains," and "casting them into the sea." The faith that saw the rock smitten, while the copious stream gushed forth, that caused the almond branch to blossom, the "withered hand" to be strengthened, the palsied man to be cured, the very devils to be cast out; this faith in the sovereign Owner of all power, is our only resource in this day of need.

. . . . . .

To return to our Militia-men.

Nearly three weeks had passed, and we found we had gained the hearts of our friends. They did not want to part with us.

"We are going to Aldershot," they said. "Will you come with us?"

At first this petition was merely laughed off as an impossibility, and not worth consideration. *But it* began to be so pressed by so many of the

men, that as the last days of their stay drew near, G—— and I found it very hard to give our decided refusals.

"What will we do without this place at Aldershot?" they urged most pathetically.

"Ye wouldna like your young men to go all wrong, *would* ye now?" was being most earnestly asked one afternoon by a solitary man, in that very hot room, as he leant across the table where I was putting the papers straight. "Just come with us. It's only a week, and then we'll be all gone."

At this moment an officer stood in the doorway. We had many kind visitors, and much sympathy and help from strangers as well as friends. But here was a friend in need! A stranger to myself, he spoke such kind words of encouragement, that I forgot my fatigues as he warmly seconded the Scotchman's request. Funds were a difficulty. But this "mountain" was "removed" by a letter which followed his visit.

God gives generous hearts. Will He not bless the generosity? Yes! *doubly* YES! when it is turned into a channel of benefit for the soul as well as body of the receiver. It then becomes an Eternal good!

G—— now had to be consulted; and he appeared to be ready to go to the world's end for

a soldier or a Scotchman. If we had won their hearts, they certainly had won ours.

Our party consisted of our excellent and able missionary (who already was much interested in the militia), G——, my parents, and myself, the pony carriage, and a small light cart for bringing provisions to the tent.

So we went. Early one morning we started. My father and mother and I had a most charming "hut" lent us, where we had every comfort. G—— bivouacked on the Common in his tent. We arrived at Aldershot the same day that the militia were marched in. Cove Common was covered with the little white tents. The band was playing, the sun was shining, the hotels were full, the dust flying. Flags of various descriptions floated over the different lines of tents, pointing out to which regiment each belonged. We soon descried our special territory, which consisted of four large marquees, which had been lent us by the Army Commission Corps, and which were already being placed lengthways, end to end, two smaller ones being added, one to serve as a kitchen, the other for classes or readings. This we used very little, however, as we found the men always willing for anything that was proposed in the shape of singing or reading, in the general tents. Many of the men also, who would not have

taken the trouble to go out of one tent and into the other for such purposes, were delighted with the simple message of a Saviour's love, and with the winning power of the hymns sung, when once they had heard them. Thus the prejudices which to this day, if yielded to, might have remained unaltered, soon vanished away under the cheering sunbeams from above. Why should we let ourselves be overcome by these icebergs of cold aversion to divine truth—too often formed through ignorance, or through a view of the inconsistencies of some Christians—when the truth, the message we bring from the "Father of all created," has in *itself* a living power to disarm the opponent, to make the wretched heart truly happy, and to melt the sternest and most obdurate under its heavenly influences! "Prejudice" is too often a giant of mythical substance and proportion, dreaded too much by those who desire to benefit their fellow-creatures, whereas, when it is met face to face, with a loving word or a kind look, or a verse from the precious Word of Life, it has already vanished, and we find ourselves side by side with a needy heart longing for comfort and finding none, too thankful for a sympathy—perhaps hitherto unknown—and hopes of a good so real that it cannot be undermined by the world's disappointments. *If we succumb* to this much dreaded foe,

we are surely disobeying the simple command, "Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. xii.). The quotation too often heard in answer to this simple method of reaching the masses, namely, going straight to the point with them, "speaking the truth in love," is that much misused one, taken without context from St Paul's writings, and used at variance with all the rest of the chapter, as well as the whole of the general teaching of Scripture. I refer to that most hackneyed phrase which hinders so much glorious Christian work in the present day, and affords a cloak for lack of energy and courage—"ALL THINGS TO ALL MEN." Thus it is presented to us in an entirely different sense from that so plainly given in 1 Cor. ix. 22, "To the weak became I as weak, that I might gain the weak; I am made all things to all men, that I might by ALL means *save some*." Let us throw ourselves heartily into all the interests and wants of the people, but with all our sympathy, let us *first* shew them in all pre-eminence the beauty, the loveliness of Him "who is altogether to be desired." HE will attract. HIS work on this earth is not to drive away, but to "draw all men unto Him."

When we went to Aldershot, I had often heard it said: "Soldiers are different from other men. *You might be able* to get other working men to

rooms managed on these principles, but soldiers must not be treated in this way. Let them have billiards, papers, smoking, &c., and a small room *upstairs*, if you like, in which meetings or classes are held." "What!" I used to think, "banish the Lord of glory from our army men, as though we were ashamed of His very name! How different from the loyal enthusiasm with which the name of our Queen is ever brought to the front! With what honour we treat her anthem, our country's colours, and every officer who appears in her name! and He is the KING, coming soon to reign upon this earth." Besides one's obvious sense of right and wrong in the matter, I knew enough of soldiers in their ordinary life to be able to contradict these statements, and to answer them in my own mind with the Lord's true words of gentle reproach, "Oh ye of *little faith!*" I can only add, that had I not been positive of this before I went to Aldershot, I soon found that every hour of our experience there, was to refute this charge against our soldiers. The regulars, as well as the militia, crowded our tents in overwhelming numbers in all their spare time, and we were simply *entreated* by them "never to go away again," but always to remain in Aldershot. These tents, which held about four hundred, would not contain the throngs

of customers who came for coffee, tea, ginger-beer, cakes, bread and butter, "a read of the papers," games, and very often indeed "a little book," or "just a tract, please." Great numbers of men made use of our tables for writing their letters; and numbers, as before, wanted their letters written for them. "Aye, thankye! and I'm verra much obleeged to ye!" would be a very common response from the Scotchmen, when at the end of our performance we had read aloud to the dictator the document just about to be posted in our tin biscuit-box, which served as a post-office, and which was regularly emptied three times a-day. Very often an offer of "bawbees" was made to complete the arrangement. This of course was always refused, but not always withdrawn. Sometimes we had very interesting talks over these letters, and were let into many secrets of home troubles, too often caused by "the drink"; when we had, of course, the opportunity of telling of JESUS, the sinner's friend, and were able to know by experience that that name is not only "sweet in a believer's ear," but in the heart of the poor despised one, who was perhaps at that very moment just longing for a friend. Some of these men were very determined; and though they were most grateful to us and full of kind respect and willingness to hear everything that was said

or read to them, they would not give up their own opinions. One great rough-looking man came one evening to have a letter written to his wife in Scotland. He was one of the Militia. After some very ambiguous expressions, and a great deal of beating about the bush, I suppose to put me off the scent of the true state of things, he said, "I am that sorry, I canna tell; but I hope we will make it all right some day." He then told her to try and get her things out of pawn, and "keep up a good heart" till his return. At last he leant his head on the table and sobbed. "Tell me what is the matter," I said; "have you had any trouble since you left home?" Poor fellow! he looked up and shook himself like a Newfoundland dog after it has been in the water, and said, "Oh no! it's no trouble"; and then he confessed that he had been poaching, that on an unlucky day he had been caught, and put in prison, and he was only just out when he had to join the militia regiments that were coming to England; so that he had only seen his wife for one day before he left. She had been turned out of the house because she could not pay the rent, had pawned her things, and now, he feared, was in great want. "Oh," I said, "your poor wife! what trouble and misery she must be in! I don't wonder that you are thinking

of her, and that you are very sorry for her." "I'm a' that," he said with emphasis; then continuing the letter, he reminded her to be sure and have all *his* clothes ready for him when he came home, and with a few very strong flings at "them who made him come such a way from home," and some very disparaging remarks on the heat of the English climate, and the lack of comforts in this strange land, he said, "You'll tell her, if you please, that I send her three shillings by order." He now began to look as if he had exhausted his material, and was coming to an end of his letter, so I said, "Is that all?" "Yes, thankye," he said, "I think that is about all." "Will you not tell her you are sorry that you have brought such troubles on your home, and that you will give up poaching from this time?" "Eh, no! I canna tell her that. I'll go at it again the first chance I have. There's nothing like that sport." Here he placed his hands as if he were taking aim with a gun, put his head on one side, and screwed up one eye in the most ludicrous manner, making a clicking noise with his tongue, and finishing up the momentary pantomime with a most satisfactory "There! I'll be bound you don't know the fun of that. You never tried it, you see. It's what *I* like. Out all in the dark, creeping along on your

hands and feet. It's so wild. It's beautiful. Then when ye see a hare or a rabbit cross your path, if the gamekeeper's looking, it's all up with ye; and if not, why you have a fine gude supper, and the fun into the bargain." . . . .

He listened to all I had to say, removed his Glengarry when I spoke of a Father's love and pity, and of heaven, a home *only* for those who are His children here, and finally allowed me to put a tract in the letter to his wife, which he posted, enclosing the "three shillings." But though he was often in the tents, and was always a warm friend to us, I never heard any further expression of penitence from his lips, and can only hope that in his far-away Scotch home he may think of what he heard amongst us.

This man, with multitudes more quite as hard as himself, who would never have cared to go into a church or a meeting, used to sit quite still, listening with the greatest interest to the hymn-singing, or to the few verses which I used often to read out of the Bible, just as they were sitting round the tables playing their games or reading the papers. By this means numbers heard the word of life, and in its pleasantest and most attractive form, without a long sermon, in simple

stories as our Lord used Himself to distribute it when He was upon earth. Our tents never emptied when I took up the Bible, but, on the contrary, whenever we began to read or sing there was generally a rush from outside to get seats or standing-room amongst us.

The men had listened intently to the passage read and explained, and I was just giving out the hymn of which they were so fond—

"Just as I am, without one plea,
But that Thy blood was shed for me,
And that Thou bidd'st me come to Thee,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, poor, wretched, blind;
Sight, riches, healing of the mind,
Yea, all I need, in Thee to find,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am, Thou wilt receive,
Wilt welcome, pardon, cleanse, relieve!
Because Thy promise I believe,
O Lamb of God, I come!

Just as I am (Thy love unknown
Has broken every barrier down),
Now to be Thine, yea, Thine alone,
O Lamb of God, I come!"

when the stentorian voice of some one behind me shouted, "Do it, my men, to-night. Do IT!" An intense silence prevailed, and all were listening eagerly. *It* was a tall, young artillery sergeant,

with three stripes on his sleeve, who had spoken the electrifying words.

"Do what?" I whispered to him. "Do you want them to sing it?"

"No!" he said, in a voice loud enough to be heard by every one. "I want them to DO IT to-night. They have been talking about and singing about it long enough. I want them to COME to HIM to-night!"

"Go on!" said a voice near. "Tell us some more about it."

So he proceeded:—

"Oh, comrades! nineteen years I have served in the army; seventeen of those years I served Satan. The last two years I have served JESUS; and these last two years have been the happiest years in all my life. Come to Him now! you will find Him a Friend worth knowing. He is the Saviour for YOU, my comrades. Thank God for the blessed meetings in these tents; but you must not be satisfied with attending these meetings, YOU MUST COME TO JESUS NOW. Rise and sing" . . .

At the close of the hymn, which was sung most heartily to the tune of the Old Hundredth by the Scotchman's request, an inquiry meeting in an adjoining tent was immediately proposed, and so warmly *responded* to, that we found difficulty in

getting sufficient seats. The tent was full; and wonderful it was to see some men with their Bibles open on their knee, pointing out the simple messages of salvation through Christ in John iii. 16, and Acts xvi. 28, as well as other passages, which brought to many a thirsty heart that night the same glorious tidings of pardon and peace which multitudes are now receiving in different parts of our sin and sorrow-stricken earth.

Of the many inquiry and prayer-meetings, as well as Bible classes held amongst the men, many of them being conducted by themselves, certainly our last meeting shewed, as marvellously as any other, the power of the Lord to bless.

The next morning the tents were taken down. The missionary, G——, and myself, went through many last tender adieus before we forsook Cove Common, where we had spent so many hours in the great heat, and where we had found so many lasting interests amidst both soldiers and militia.

We urged those men who were stationed at Aldershot to attend as frequently as possible Miss Daniell's home for soldiers; but were generally answered by the fact, that it was a long way from the North Camp, where most of our men happen to be quartered. Poor fellows! how they begged us to have a large wooden room, on the same plan as the tents, stationed in the very midst of them

all. "Not a grand place," they said, "which many of our men would think twice before they enter, and perhaps would never enter at all; but a plain sort of a place, like a large hut, with a counter at one end, and plenty of pictures and texts on the walls, and books and papers, and the musical boxes." "And the little bears," chimed in another. "*We* would promise you good custom, and plenty of attendance. The place would be full every night."

We quite believed them; but, as usual, *funds* were the difficulty, even for so small an outlay as this, and with expectation of good results. We were obliged to refuse the invitation; and we left Aldershot that day.

One evening, when the militia were being reviewed on the Common, a lady who took a special interest in the Ayr and Renfrew Brigades as "countrymen" of her own, drove up in her carriage to see them, and to look at our tents. She had already given a handsome subscription to our work amongst them, and sent a number of little books for distribution, and now she had come to give us her sympathy, and to speak kind and loving "wishes for our success," and "desire for their welfare." It was a cheering little visit. An encouragement by the way, so precious to those who *are* bearing "the toil and heat of the

day." But we little thought it was to be her last work on earth!—very shortly afterwards, a large and loving circle of relations had gathered round her dying-bed. That sick room was the "gate of heaven." She had loved the Master's name on earth, cared for His people, taken part in His work, and now we could only say with those who sorrowed in the midst of a bright hope—

"From the throne we hear
Heavenly voices clear:
'Come up hither all,'
Ringeth the loud call,
All who bear the cross below,
Who follow Jesus now.
Answer we again,
'Yea, Amen, Amen.'"

CHAPTER III.

Harvest Ingatherings.

Let truth prevail!
  Truth ever true, not shifting with the wind;
Walk we in light, as sons of noon,
  The shadows that divide us left behind.

"A WORD in season, how good is it! Like apples of gold in pictures of silver." These words are dictated by a higher wisdom even than that of Solomon. In tracking the daily path of those whose lips have been touched with the coal of heavenly fire, and whose hearts we anointed with that same divine spirit, we find daily evidence of the abundant ingathering that may be reaped from the "fields white already to harvest," when once the ready sickle of an earnest and diligent faith is placed amidst those golden ears. Fields of infinite need, promises of infinite success, calls to an infinite and eternal co-work with the fellowship of none other than the Son of God Himself," "Faith, which is the gift of God," the sickle already offered, and only the "labourer" wanted! In each corner of the great harvest, fields are ripening, heart-stirring demands for simple gospel

messages are reaching our ears. But the called "labourers" fold their hands. Devoting their precious time, strength, and money—each given them as a talent from the coming King to be employed for ETERNITY—to some secular benefit for the class for whom their interest, perhaps of heart-felt interest, has been called forth, they whisper in modest tones their lack of power, energy, or knowledge requisite for the humble work of following in HIS steps, the great Saviour of souls. Or they tell us with learned words, of the wisdom of "dealing *gradually*" with the perishing ones, who are dropping by millions like the seared leaf of the autumnal tree into a long perdition, because they "know not Him, whom to know is life eternal." Whereas this "gradual dealing," if you sift it to the dregs, resolves itself thus:—The monied philanthropist, or the man to whom he intrusts the detail of his projects for good, and to whose counsel he bends, will tell us that the first step is to make the nation sober, and that on this foundation we may build other and more distinctly religious works, thus separating a mighty national reformation into two distinct parts: first, man's work; second, God's work! Surely, were such a division of labour essential, it would seem but the dutifulness of a loyal subject *to obey the King's* command when He commanded,

in so many different parts of His divine teaching, and still commands as His given line of action—"FIRST THE KINGDOM OF GOD AND HIS RIGHTEOUSNESS," following an obedience to this law by the blessing of all things added unto you, and in obedience, with faith, to reserve the order of such an attempted reform. But in the second place, this is taken for granted, that man is *able* to reform man. Surely here we undertake too great and too vast a task—a task too great for us to perform. How much better to go before the great adversary, whether in his strongholds of drunkenness, infidelity, or indifferentism, in the strength of the Almighty One! using His weapons, putting forth His word, telling of His love, and throwing into every possible medium the ONE true remedy for all evil.

Would a large and attractive coffee-restaurant in a crowded thoroughfare of our metropolis be rendered the less attractive by the introduction of Bibles and other books on the tables, the distribution of Mr Smithie's charmingly illustrated papers, tracts, and leaflets? Would a few bright texts on the wall of a brightly-lighted and pleasant-looking room drive away *one* customer? or would these additional tokens of a thoughtful care and loving interest in the souls as well as bodies of the wayfaring men, not rather draw thousands within

these walls, and *keep* them there too, and be used of God to fill them with a divine happiness, and give them the "new birth," which is essential to a man's wellbeing? Golden sheaves lie ready to your hand, and you shrink from reaping and binding them, because you say, "we shall give offence," "the coffee-houses will never pay," and yet by a most candid confession we are told you have never tried the other means.

A clergyman came one afternoon with a large party of friends to see our coffee-rooms, and to inquire into the causes of "their success," as he was kind enough to say. Of course he was shewn according to his wish all the *minutiæ* of our arrangements, and then was shewn the room where daily united prayer is held for the blessings needed on every part of our operations. As he sat down to take a cup of tea after his tour of inspection, he smilingly said, "I approve of all the *secular* part of this work."

"What!" we asked, "do you not approve of the prayer and Bible-reading connected with it, which is absolutely our mainstay, and without which we could not move a step?"

"No," he said, "of that part of the proceedings I do *not* approve."

A gentleman who came to see the rooms the *other day, intending* to throw his influence into

the promotion of temperance generally, and that by means of a system of wide-spread coffee-houses, spoke very bitterly against the suggestions already made in this chapter of a free and open circulation in all such places of Scriptural truth, saying at the same time, "You must not mistake me, I advocate open-air preaching," &c. While he was talking to me, one or two men entered the rooms who were noted instances of the advisability of this plan, and the special blessing vouchsafed to it—men, whose dark and flagrant moral character could never have been truly, if ever, partially altered by a more negative procedure than that adopted within our walls. He was entreated to converse with them, as intelligent reasoning men, who "knew both sides of the story," as they themselves describe it. But he refused, and shortly after left, having heard nothing, except with a sceptical smile, of the Omnipotent marvellous dealings with us. On my way home I was joined by a stalwart labourer, a man of superior culture, and formerly noted for opposition to every form of vital Christianity, and to none more so than the meetings and proceedings generally of our rooms; but now, by the Lord's grace, as marked an upholder of all good, and as consistent and dependable a servant, as you would find in our *town*. Always a kind smile and encouraging

word may be had from my roadside friend; living a long distance from our field of operations, our conferences, when we *can* enjoy them, are generally held by the way. On this particular evening we were both rather silent, until I yielded to the impulsive desire for sympathy under the *burden* with which my stranger-friend's words had inspired me. In a few sentences I relieved myself of my trouble, and was answered thus by the strong deep voice of my companion.

"Was *that* what he said? was it? I should call him a mistaken man! Hadn't got his head in the right place; he hadn't. What! thought the Bibles and the texts would drive the people away? I wish I could have seen him. I would have got my work over half-an-hour sooner, and would have come up there and met him. I would have told him the real truth, I would. I *wish* I had knowed; I *wish* I had." His words reminded me of the melancholy sentence in Luke xvi. 31, "Neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead."

But when we know that we are backed up by hundreds of similar advocates in this town who three or four years ago could only have spoken from what might be called an ignorant experience, as hesitatingly as any one else on the *advisability* or likelihood of success in this mode

of procedure, we cannot but entreat those who are so liberally disposed to contribute to every philanthropic effort before *giving*, or *advising*, or even *consulting with the wisest friends*, why not look upwards with one prayer from the depths of your heart, "Lord, what wilt THOU have me to do?" Then, a search for the answer in the divine word, given as a "lamp for our feet," and as "light for our path," and SUCCESS, TRUE, ABUNDANT, LASTING SUCCESS, must be the result. Would you not be glad that through the gift of money, time, or influence, however small your mite in proportion to that needed, you had won *a single soul* into the bright realms of heavenly light! The struggle in the present day between good and evil is no sham fight. It is a desperate warfare waged between heaven and hell, and our earth is the battle-field. On whose side are *we* ranged? When David raised his eyes from the plague-stricken land, and beheld standing between heaven and earth an angel with a drawn sword in his hand, he felt that immediate steps must be taken, and but ONE REMEDY presented itself. Araunah's thrashing-floor was purchased at "the *full* price," and a tide of innocent blood poured forth. As the blood flowed, and as the king knelt pleading for his dying subjects, "the Lord commanded the angel, and he put up his sword again

into the sheath thereof." Judgment was sheathed in atonement; death was changed into LIFE through an all-prevailing intercession; and we then hear that on this foundation the renowned and glorious temple of the living God was raised a monument to His mercy, His power, and His sure word of promise.

One evening, amidst other customers who surrounded the tables in their coffee-room, I happened to speak to a young man, who told me he was a stranger in this place, not having been many weeks in the town. He was very reticent, but something in the grave, sad look of his face, made me think he had his own troubles. I asked him whether he was likely to come to the room again soon.

"Oh yes!" he replied, as gravely as before; "I am very thankful to have such a place to come to."

I often saw him in the coffee-room after that, and sometimes had a talk with him. One night he said, "I am a total abstainer. I have never tasted any intoxicating drink in my life. But I am working among a terribly drinking set. This room is the only comfort I have.

"Do you know a BETTER COMFORT than that?" I said.

"*No!*" he replied most decidedly; "I know

nothing at all about it. I know what you mean, for I have been at some of your meetings this week; and"—here his voice faltered—"and I have good parents." . . . . Then stopping abruptly, he said, "You must excuse me, I cannot talk about——"

I just said to him, "Well, you must always remember you have warm friends here; and come and see us as often as you can. Remember, too, that the Lord Jesus LOVES YOU, and wants you to give Him your heart, that He may be your Friend for ever."

When asking the men who serve in the rooms to take an interest in him as a stranger, I was told they already knew him, and that his character was good and his conduct steady, but that he did seem very lonely.

Two or three weeks after this I had a message from my friend, saying he wished to speak to me alone. His first sentence was: "I was a total abstainer before, and very unhappy; I was wretched. But now, thank God, I see things in a different light. Eternal life is OFFERED me, as a sinner, through Jesus Christ. I believe in Him, and He forgives my sins. This is what you call the gospel, or 'glad tidings,' and GLAD TIDINGS IT IS!" He spoke very quietly, very solemnly. And then

he told me in a few words his history. He had left home contrary to the will of his parents. "So good they are!" he said; "they brought me up *well*, but I chafed under my father's strictness. I wanted to see other places, so I left home with another man, who they told me was not a good companion for me; and it was quite true, but I would not hear. . . . I have written to my parents now, to tell them how sorry I feel for the past, and how anxious I am to live as a new man." Then shaking his head with a quizzical look, he said, "It will take them a good while to believe it, I expect!"

When next he saw me, he said he had had a "very kind encouraging letter" from his mother. All went on smoothly for a time, and he was one of my greatest helpers as to influence amongst the others, for he was so consistent. Being a great reader, and well educated in a first-rate northern school, he was sufficiently informed to converse freely on many subjects of interest to the other men, and never lost an opportunity of putting in a quiet word for the great Master whom he had so lately begun to serve.

I had no sooner begun to look upon him as one of my props for the winter's work just beginning, than to my great sorrow I was told that he had enlisted, and was beginning to combat the point

as an impossibility, when he walked into the room with the same grave, pre-occupied air which he always wore. Of course he was immediately attacked with the question, to which he replied, "Yes! I have long wanted to be a soldier. I do not like my present employment, so I went to Aldershot yesterday and enlisted. It was the best thing I could do."

"But what will your parents say?"

"They don't know about it yet; and they won't like it at first, for they don't know the advantages of an army life. But when they hear I am getting on well, after a time they will be pleased."

We were all rather astonished at this very sudden arrangement. But he held to his point, that it was the best thing for him. He did not leave us, however, without most earnest and hearty expressions of gratitude for the interest taken in him, and for the benefit he had received from attending the rooms, saying many times, "I am sure it was a good thing that I ever came *here*."

From time to time we heard that he was getting on exceedingly well. About a year after our first acquaintance with him, I was talking to some soldiers at Miss Daniell's house, when I suddenly became aware of the presence of my friend in the midst of the group, but so meta-

morphosed, that it took me some moments to identify him. The same grave face; but a year's drill, and a red coat with fine epaulets, had so smartened up his figure, that I considered myself clever to have recognized him.

"I am going on very well," he said, "and very happy. I like this life much; and I am able to stand firm. God gives me grace."

His sentences in speaking to me were very brief, as usual, but to our missionary, who was his special friend, he opened out more freely, and told him that his parents had written most kindly to him ever since he had joined the army, and were so thankful to know that he was going on well. In the last prayer we had together, when he was leaving D——, he mentioned his companions, who were "so careless," and prayed that they might "take a hatred of the public-house, and choose better ways." A few weeks after his departure, I was asked to speak to a young man before the Sunday evening service. A well-dressed, respectable looking person appeared, and in mysterious whispers asked me if he might join the choir. I told him our rules did not admit perfect strangers, nor indeed any man who would not take his place amongst us as an earnest Christian man.

"*I* am not that," he said, "but I am very

uncomfortable, and very tired of my old ways of going on." After a short pause he said, in a still lower whisper, "DRINK is ruining me;" and he looked round as he said it, as though he feared some of his tempters might be within ear-shot.

When I replied that he was the last person, judging from appearance, from whose lips I should have expected to hear such a confession, he said again, stamping his foot on the ground and clenching his fist as he spoke, "Its my CURSE, that's what it is. But I don't know how to escape from it, nor from them who drag me down every night, and all the day long keep on cursing and swearing, till I sometimes think I am in the lost place altogether."

"Oh no! dear friend," I said, "you are not there, but you are in the place of HOPE. HE gave them, we read (in Hosea ii. 15), 'the valley of trouble (marg. reading for Achor) for a door of hope.' The LORD is your Friend to-night; He gives the hope, a 'sure hope,' too, of SALVATION 'through Christ Jesus our Lord.' He is the only ONE who can deliver you from this Satanic power."

"Yes! it *is* Satanic," he said bitterly.

"For this very reason the Lord God has sent you a great Saviour, who has conquered sin and death, and can give you freedom from your misery, if you will ask Him for it."

"I don't know anything about religion," he said; "I never was in the way of hearing it. But we had a mate who worked up at our place" (and here he mentioned the soldier just alluded to) "who was a real good steady young chap. He never preached what he did not practise. I saw the change in him through coming to the rooms, and he often told me what a happy comfortable place this was. So I came last Thursday evening to the meeting, and then I asked afterwards if I might take the pledge. As your book was full, a man sitting by me at one of the tables, and who had been talking to me before, said, 'Here's my pocket-book; sign it there. That's as good as a bond!' And he spoke such fine encouraging words to me, that I felt much better that night. I went back to my lodgings very quiet, and never told no one where I had been. On Friday night I came again, and was sitting reading by the table there, when a boy came in and said, 'You are wanted outside. Your master wants to speak to you.' When I went out, there was four of my mates; they had found me out, and they had come to punish me, as they said. They were all intoxicated, and quite mad with drink; and now, they said, I was to go back with them, and they had a glass of gin ready for me. I refused, and *tried to get back* inside the room again, but

they were too strong for me. I saw my only chance was to get away from them down the street. So I set off running, but I heard them with their oaths pursuing me wherever I went. At last I got ahead of them, and they could not find me, for it was so very dark. The next day they threatened me with violence if I came again on Saturday night. So I did not *dare* to come. But I am fond of music, and reading, and writing, and all such things, and if you would give me something to do here, so that I could say they are *expecting* me up there, and will wonder where I am if I am not punctual, I do not think they will be so likely to interfere."

We made one or two arrangements for him as he wished, and then I asked him whether he would kneel down with me and pray to our Father in heaven for His gracious help in this difficulty?

He hesitated, and then said, "If you like; but I have never been accustomed to such a thing." When we rose from our knees, he looked up and all round, and said, "Do you believe GOD heard us? I am very grateful to you indeed. Nobody ever prayed with me in my life before. I'll try; I will try *so* hard to do right. Will you talk to me again some day?"

He went on well for a time, then left the place. Before he went, I had not seen him for a few days,

and wanted to find his address, so I asked G—— across the counter one day to get it for me. He was just telling me he did not know how it could be obtained, when a man who was having his dinner close by said, "I can get it for you."

"Why," I asked, "do you know him?"

"Yes; I am one of the men who work with him," was the reply.

"And do you often come to this room?" I said. (This was one of the party who had so objected to his coming.)

"Oh yes; we all come," he said.

"Some evening when you are all together in the coffee-room, I should like you to give me a signal, and I will come and make friends with the other men—and *you too!*" I added, laughing.

"All right," he said, "I will."

Accordingly one night I noticed an uplifted finger, and went in the direction signified, where I soon found a most interesting group of men, all clever and superior, and quite ready for a talk.

All these men became my friends and warm upholders of our work in all its departments. They still adhere to us with the same enthusiasm that they first opposed us; their excuse for the former line of proceedings being, "We did not know what a nice place it was then."

"*And when did* you find it out?" I once asked.

"Well, we lost one of our mates one evening. We couldn't find him anywhere; and then we were told he was here, so we came to look for him. When we looked in, we took a fancy to the place, and have come to it ever since."

And hundreds more of the *unlikely* men of the town our rooms have thus attracted, by the blessing of God resting upon them.

Our little cottage hospital still continues a centre of deep interest, always receiving and sending forth again a constant stream of suffering ones who have entered its walls, to obtain either by God's mercy a complete cure, or at anyrate great relief and comfort from their stay under its roof. The same invaluable nurse and kind doctors give their aid in this blessed healing work. Many a *soul* may thank God too for a visit to our little hospital; true sympathy and temporal kindness so often being used as a medium through which higher benefits may readily flow.

I shall not readily forget the nurse's reception of a message that came on a dreary afternoon when I was sitting by her fire. It was to the effect that a man had fallen from a height while doing his work, and was badly hurt. At the same time she was informed that he was a terrible character, and perhaps ought hardly to be admitted.

"He might give you a great deal of trouble," said the informant; "he is very turbulent and disagreeable, drinks hard, and is a great fighter."

"A pleasant character for an inmate of our quiet little hospital!" I was just thinking to myself, when the nurse, with her usual lively and decided manner, which generally gives a tone of cheerfulness to the most melancholy events, said, "Turbulent, is he? Oh! then I should *like* to have him in; where is he?"

We all laughed at this unwonted welcome so decidedly accorded to the much-dreaded invalid.

"Where *is* he?" she asked again. "At home," was the reply.

"He had better come in at once; there is no time to lose," she said.

The next day our hero was in the quiet hospital ward, in a bed of snowy whiteness, and tended by skilled and gentle hands.

"Is he troublesome?" I asked, when I arrived.

"Oh! dear no!" she said. "He is as gentle as a lamb; will you go and see him?"

It was evident that poor N——'s experiences, however varied they might have been, had not hitherto lain in this particular direction, and he was *not* used to a sick-bed; nor was he used, I should imagine, to such comforts as now surrounded him. A great *powerful* fellow, he certainly lay there very

"meek." He did not know whether to be grateful or ashamed, whether to yield to a new sensation of humility, or to mount and ride gallantly his high horse. He was very restless, rather subdued, and evidently quite perplexed. His trouble was most genuine. At first he would never kneel down with the rest at the nightly prayer. It must have seemed strange to him, a noted swearer, to be suddenly brought into the region of prayer, and within sound of tidings of love and mercy.

After some time, however, he quite gave way, and his heart yielded to the softening influences which for some time by their gentle power had been gradually overcoming him.

I remember that day well. I had been reading aloud to all the patients, and when I had finished and was leaving the ward, as I passed him sitting on his chair by the fire, I touched his hand and said, "Don't forget, N——, that you have a FRIEND. The Lord Jesus loves you *so much*." He buried his face in his hands and sobbed. "But I am so wicked," he said.

"And He is so good," I replied. "He died for you—'the just for the unjust.' He has taken your sins, and He offers you His righteousness!"

A clergyman who was at that time visiting the hospital gave him great comfort by the same simple gospel message.

When N—— was leaving the hospital quite restored to health, he walked home with me, and said before we parted, "I want to give my heart to Jesus. When shall I do it?"

"When!" I said. "To-NIGHT, to be sure. Not a minute later than NOW! The Lord is waiting, waiting to receive you. Why should you delay any longer? Now is the accepted time; NOW is the day of salvation."

"I should like you to pray with me," he said very earnestly.

So he went in with me to my little sitting-room, and there we knelt together.

"By God's help," he said, "I hope to lead a new life from this time."

That night's resolution has been kept. Shall we ever despair of the cure of a hardened heart when brought into contact with the healing power of the Good Physician?

It was on a very hot July day that I called at N——'s house, in passing through the place where he lives. As I knocked at the door he opened it to me; and my very first glance at his face shewed me something was the matter.

"What is the matter!" I said; but what need for words?—there, stretched on an extemporized bed by the window, panting for breath, lay a most *beautiful boy in* almost the last agonies of death.

Tenderly leaning over him while the mother wept as she fanned his little face, the father said, "He is just going. Can't be here long now."

The illness of a very few days had withered in the bud the life of their most beloved child; but by a look at those two sorrowing faces, you could tell that *in* the sorrow there was hope! Yes! true comfort had been ministered to these aching hearts, and that by a mighty and unerring hand.

"Ask the Good Shepherd to receive our child," he said.

So we committed the little dying lamb to Him who promises a home in the "many mansions" to the tired little ones of our weary earth, and solemnly pledges an unbroken word to "KEEP that which we have committed unto Him to that great day."

Very few words passed between us as we stood by that precious little dying child. As I left the room, the father said, "Can you come to-morrow, the first thing?" . . .

I came, but it was all over.

"Heaven seems very near," the parents said. "He just passed away with a smile last night."

"We know where he is! don't we?" said the father. "He is in JESUS' arms!"

A marvellous peace seemed to rest on that little household. Like the clouds on an evening sky,

they had caught the subdued tints of the passing day. They had stood on that wondrous threshold, the horizon where earth and heaven meet, and had tasted of the glory.

On the day after the funeral I called on the mother, the father being out at work. When I told her how I had thought of her on the previous day, saying, "It must have been a sad day for you."

She answered, "Yes, it was. But it wasn't ALL sad."

"No! you had the TRUE hope. You thought of his sweet rest in the happy home *now*, and you could look forward to the happy meeting by-and-bye."

"Yes, *all* that! I had all that comfort, and more too, for the Lord Jesus seemed so very near. But you know I had another comfort! It was when I looked at his father. Oh, *how* changed he is! Isn't it wonderful? I used to dread his step; the very sound of his voice made us shudder when he was in drink. Then the oaths that used to be heard in this room! Oh," she said, "it was a fearful life. But now he is a true father to the children, and such a kind husband to me." Here the poor woman quite broke down, as she drew the touching contrast between her past and present life. Sadness had been turned into gladness by the rays of the harvest sun.

From the time that this man left the hospital, he had constantly attended our coffee-room and the meetings, as well as the parish church, and had often spoken of the blessing he had found the coffee-room to be to him on the week-evenings. His wife, too, has always added her warmest testimony to this fact.

On one Saturday evening we were singing hymns in the coffee-room, another of our most efficient helpers playing on the harmonium, while our choir led the singing. We had sung one or two hymns, when N—— requested that we would sing—

'Shall we gather at the river,
Where bright angel feet have trod;
With its crystal tide for ever
Flowing by the throne of God?

On the margin of the river,
Washing up its silver spray,
We will walk and worship ever,
All the happy, golden day.

Ere we reach the shining river,
Lay we every burden down;
Grace our spirits will deliver,
And provide a robe and crown.

At the shining of the river,
Mirror of the Saviour's face;
Saints whom death will never sever,
Raise their songs of saving grace.

Soon we'll reach the silver river,
Soon our pilgrimage will cease;
Soon our happy hearts will quiver
With the melody of peace."

When all had joined heartily in singing this hymn, I asked N—— why he had chosen it.

"Well, you see," he said, "it's nice to join in that. It makes me happy to think about it. It used to be so different with me."

"Now, YOU are going to that bright 'river,' are you not?"

"Me? Oh yes!" he replied most decidedly; then putting his hand on the fair curly head of the little boy who was now his eldest, and who frequently accompanies him to the rooms, "and this one too, and the mother, and all of us. One has been taken, and the rest are all following.

'SOON we'll reach the silver river,
SOON our pilgrimage will cease.'"

Amidst many temptations, and often great difficulties, this man is steadily pursuing his way—the "right" and "narrow way."

Reader, PRAY that he may be kept firm; and that thus another golden sheaf may be gathered into the heavenly garner, a sheaf reaped by the sickle of faith, and united with bands of eternal and compassionate love.

CHAPTER IV.

Loving-Kindnesses and Tender Mercies.

Shaming all our fear and murmuring,
  Thy deliverance is wrought;
We can only bow in silence,
  Cannot thank Thee as we ought!

HOW often may these words find truth in our experience, if we have but the grain of faith! "Cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God." Thus faith ought to be, is, or may be, the possession of every living soul. "It is so hard to trust!" says one. "WHOM?" we would ask. Look at the object of trust. Listen to the One who commands this inward motion of confidence between your heart and His. By one act of retrospect see that which God HATH DONE in ages past, see that which He is doing at this present time *for* His people *in* the world; and surely history will combine with present testimony to add its great AMEN to the promises of God's most holy word, wherein you find *more* than promise—a living Present Friend, manifested by the power of the Holy Ghost. FATHER, SON, and SPIRIT, one *glorious Trinity*, perfect in divine word and work.

GOD, the Omnipotent Triune Jehovah! Is it "hard to trust" HIM? Such phrases are indeed a mock humility, but, alas! too often heard on the lips of even His *children*. It is "hard," we might say impossible, to trust one who has constantly deceived and failed those who have rested in his integrity. But where every outline of the name signifies pure TRUTH, and presents before as an unerring ONE, the case is surely altered. A want of trust under such circumstances becomes an insult; a want of confidence, for which there remains no shadow of an excuse; an unbelief, for which there can only be one cause, viz., an ignorance, or want of consideration of the divine Person who commands our simple unhesitating faith.

Attending a meeting of workers, on one occasion, where different persons were expected to give their testimony to the Lord's dealings with them in their own separate departments of work, I was not a little surprised to hear each one speak in a more or less depressed tone of the failures and *discouragements* of their experience; on the whole presenting before us so very little, if any worthy result, for all the labour and fruitless desire apparently thus expended. I can only say that, *had I possessed* no Bible of my own, nor had I *been privileged to* enjoy a most reverse experience

myself, I should have gone away, saying, with the servant of old, "Thou art an austere man, gathering where thou hast not strawed, and reaping where thou hast not sown;" and should have turned *away* from that loving, blessed service, to seek some more genial object for the expenditure of one's sympathy and strength. These ladies seemed to forget the humble, struggling workers, who had taken their places in these meetings simply with the hope of obtaining the refreshment they needed for future labours. A chill fog of the coldest unbelief, and a murmuring spirit —the same that brought "serpents" into the Israelitish host—was drawn down upon us. So strong was the effect, that one could only look up and say, "Lord, either take me away from this place, or come AS A SHIELD between my soul and the words of the speakers!" But this is a most commonly prevalent spirit in workers' meetings. Little or no PRAISE, and much complaint; while, if a note of praise is introduced amongst the "willow harps," a thrill of astonishment, not to mention opposition, is often manifested by the leaders of the melancholy meeting! Joy, praise, thanksgiving, are acceptable in the Lord's sight, and must result in blessing. The king Jehoshaphat (2 Chron. xx.) knew the secret of successful warfare, when, on the eve of an import-

ant battle, having already "set himself to seek the Lord," having "gathered the people together to ask help of the Lord," he spoke words of encouragement, *ensuring* success, and *promising* "prosperity," because he could say, "THE LORD WILL BE WITH YOU!" Then a burst of national PRAISE, the march commenced: "And when he had consulted with the people, he appointed singers unto the Lord, and that should praise the beauty of holiness (marg. PRAISERS) as they went out before the army, and to say, Praise the Lord; for His mercy endureth for ever. *And when they began to sing and to praise,* the Lord set ambushments against the children of Ammon, Moab, and Mount Seir, which were come against Judah; and they were smitten . . . the Lord had made them to rejoice over their enemies . . . THE LORD fought against their enemies." "Whoso offereth praise glorifieth Me: and to him that ordereth his conversation aright will I shew the salvation of God" (Psa. l. 23). "Thou art holy, O Thou that inhabitest the praises of Israel. Our fathers trusted in Thee: they trusted, and Thou didst deliver them" (Psa. xxii. 3, 4).

We have constantly found it so in our work in this place. We have expected great things, and the Lord has been better to us than our highest *expectations.*

A young lady said to me one day, alluding to *Our Coffee-Room* which she had been reading, "But you tell us of no *discouragements!*" "No," I replied, "certainly not; and for two reasons—first, because we *have* no discouragements. The Lord has commanded us to "fear not, nor be discouraged" (Deut. i. 21). So that if we *are* "discouraged," it is disobedience to Him, and must certainly mar our success. But, in the second place, if we *had* discouragements, I would certainly not tell them to *you*, for such miasma as this carries in it all the infection of a plague, and I would not wish you to suffer from the contagion." The girl looked for a moment a little disappointed that she was never to be made the recipient of my *wrong* confidences, if I had any to bestow, so I entreated her, as I would ask you, my readers, to plead with the Lord for a higher and brighter tone in all work that is done *for* and *with* Him. "Power with God and man" was Jacob's secret of success. Often our want of success may proceed from lack of energy or diligence in our outward efforts; but surely more often from lack of wrestling, believing, prevailing PRAYER. A little more energy in *this* respect, a little more *time* given to this solitary dealing *with* the Almighty, and, in committee work, more open acknowledgment of our need of His help by

united prayer, and we should find on every hand, in all detail of our work, the truth of those blessed words, "He is able to do for us exceeding abundantly above all that we either ask or think" (Eph. iii. 20); and thus call forth the ascription of praise which we have in the next verse, "Unto Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus, throughout all ages, world without end. Amen."

The Lord has said, "Be strong, and of A GOOD COURAGE . . . only be thou strong and very COURAGEOUS. . . . Have not I *commanded* thee? Be strong, and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be dismayed; for the Lord thy God is with thee withersoever thou goest" (Josh. i. 6–9). The Lord was displeased when "the soul of the people was much discouraged because of the way," for then they were tempted to speak murmuring words; "And the Lord sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people, and much people of Israel died" (Numb. xxi. 4, 5). Moses said, "Why discourage ye the hearts of the children of Israel from going over into the land which the Lord hath given them?" (Numb. xxxii. 7).

Here is an upholding verse for the tried ones. *Why* should we *not* be discouraged? First, then, because we must OBEY. This is the most important *element in* all our work. Secondly, because

JESUS, our Commander, our great Forerunner in the battle on the high road of life, because "HE shall not fail, nor be discouraged" (Isa. xlii. 4). Why then should WE?

A little boy was sitting at his mother's side in a meeting, where a missionary was giving an account of one particular stage of his work where he had been much tried for lack of funds. His wife coming into the room, had found him in great depression, and heard him say, "It is just as dark as night!" When she immediately replied, "Unto the upright there ariseth light in the darkness—darkness goes before the light—darkness is the mother of light!" At this sentence the little schoolboy whispered to his mother, "What a jolly wife!"

A voice that thus whispers of "light in darkness," a finger that is ever ready to point to the "bow in the cloud," a look that tells of "gladness in the Lord," even in the midst of outward sorrow—these are gifts indeed from HIS hand, and precious gifts too. Let us ever seek to be mediums of hope, rather than crutches for the despondency, not only for our own sakes, but also for the sakes of those around us, as well as for the glory of Him who loveth to hear the "sacrifices of praise continually" (Heb. xiii. 15).

Some of the instances of our experience of this

gracious provision and merciful interposition in emergencies, may interest those who are perhaps at this moment expecting some crisis of difficulty, and perhaps wondering whether "in *this* instance the Lord will provide."

About two years ago our meetings on Sunday evenings at seven P.M., held for the poor and for the non-frequenters of any place of worship, were carried on in the low-roofed rooms, which communicated with one another by folding doors. In the centre a small platform and harmonium were placed, and there the Scripture was read most simply, and explained *as* simply and very shortly, with hymns sung, and prayer offered. This little service, lasting only ONE HOUR, was so sought after by the people that the rooms used to be crowded long before the time with anxious eager faces. One evening, arriving rather late, I found great numbers of people in the yard outside, and on the road.

"Is anything the matter?" I said, fearing something had gone wrong with our arrangements, which, thanks to G——'s powers of organisation, and the universal good behaviour of the people, were usually so orderly.

"Oh no!" was the amused reply of some of the women, meekly holding their babies at the gate. "It's always like this. You don't see it, because *you are so early.*"

"Can't you get in?" I asked. And then they crowded round, telling me how disappointing it was, that many who longed to hear could never enter the place, because they could not come long before the time for commencing the meeting.

"We'll listen a little while," they said, "under the windows, and then we'll go away."

"I'll tell you what we will do to-day," I said; "we will ASK GOD to give us a larger room, if it be His will, that you may ALL be able to come and hear."

The rooms held about four hundred people, when they were "packed tight," as G—— called it; but it was *nothing*, compared with the eagerness of the people to hear the word of God. They were hungry and thirsty. They wanted living water. When I reached my seat, which I did with some difficulty, I found that a man had fainted in a far-off corner, and the question was, how to get him out! A good portion of our precious little hour was spent in making the people move, then carrying him through the crowd, and then getting the people settled down again. At last all was quiet, and I said to them, "We are in very great want of a larger room. This one is not intended to hold so many people, and therefore is very close and unwholesome. Besides which, there are numbers of people outside who cannot get in at all."

There was a subdued murmur of response all through the place.

"I do not know of any room in the town," I continued, "nor have I any money to build one with. But it is a very good thing to be at our 'wit's end,' as David tells us, for THEN the Lord is ready to help (Psa. cvii. 27, 28). Let us all unite in silent prayer for a larger room."

First, a profound silence, and then the whispered entreaties of the people for the supply of our present need, told that the "agreeing" prayer was being offered.

"O Lord!" I then asked aloud, "if this meeting is to have Thy continued blessing and favour amongst the people, we beseech Thee to send us in thine own way a larger room. Give it us *at once* in this emergency, if it be Thy will. If *not*, we pray Thee to stop the people from coming in such numbers, that we may not have this pressure every Sunday night."

When we rose from our knees, the deaf and dumb man, who always by some marvellous instinct, or by information privately conveyed on some friend's fingers, has an impression of what is passing, handed an open hymn-book to me, first pointing upwards, and then shewing a hymn of praise, which he wanted "immediately sung!" *We sang it, with* merely the comment from myself,

"You see, we are to believe that our Father will do for us what we have asked Him to-day," and then continued the meeting as usual. As the people went out, several of them were saying, "There is a beautiful room down at the town hall, where they have the concerts and dances. It will hold nine hundred people." I smiled at the idea. They might as well have told me that there was a gold mine in California, or a crown at Westminster, as make so hopeless a suggestion as this, which was now spreading rapidly from mouth to mouth. At last I said, "I suppose you don't know that it is impossible for us to have that room for many reasons; and therefore we need not think of it."

At this their countenances fell, but one or two of the bravest echoed back to me my own words—"Ask God!" they said; and I was soon left alone in the room.

The next day, one who had at the beginning largely helped me on came to see us. He asked about the people, the coffee-room, and the meetings. We told him it was the old story over again, the work was too successful! We had not space for the people. He bravely proposed A Tent! but was met by uplifted hands. A "Tent" seemed the climax of impropriety and unseemliness. I was obliged to go out to luncheon that day; but he

promised to meet me at the post-office before he returned to town. When I drove up in the little pony carriage, there he was waiting. I shall never forget his kind face and voice as he said, "There was no difficulty at all about it. I have asked if you may have the large room in the town hall, and there appears to be no reason why you should not. You will know in a day or two."

Almost immediately there came the reply, "The room is engaged for you; would you like to use it on Sunday next?"

G—— and I reconnoitred, full of wonderment at His power, who could so easily "roll away" apparently insurmountable difficulties. There we found a fine lofty room, fitted up with luxurious seats, and capable of holding a large number of people, while its perfection as to the conveyance of sound made it as easy to speak in as one's own drawing-room. There was a raised platform at one end where, with the harmonium and choir, our arrangements would be quite complete.

It is needless to say the reality of prayer was proved to the people, when on the next Sunday two men were stationed at the doors of the Beckenham Rooms, to say, "The meeting will be held in the town hall to-night."

The room was more than half full on that first *evening, and very* soon it was as crowded as the

old one. "This was the Lord's doing; and it was marvellous in our eyes."

Ever since that eventful evening, our Sunday night meetings have been held in that room—that same friend still paying the rent for us, and our gracious Father still continuing His richest blessings on the word read to the people.

Can you wonder, my reader, that amidst the conflicting opinions of clergymen and others, some saying, "Go on!" and some saying as peremptorily, "Stop!" we see but one course of action at present before us, that of OBEDIENCE to the Highest will? Opposing none, but helping to the utmost of our power EVERY portion of the true Church of Christ, gathering the people, not into a sect, but into any band of Christians who will manifest their sympathy, and hold out to us a helping hand, merely carrying the "glad tidings" to perishing ones, in accordance with the pure gospel teaching of our Lord Himself, can we but feel that those clergymen and ministers who are willing for the sake of the poor and the unlearned to foster and to encourage such mission work as this, are indeed building up their own church, and are working *with* Christ in the building up of His true temple, even a spiritual house—"the elect of God, precious?"

So many striking instances of the Lord's gracious

care and help have been given to cheer us on our way, that too many pages would be exhausted were we to attempt to recount even all within our own memory at the present moment.

I have so often found it true that the "joy of the Lord is our strength." When we have been praising him, victory has come; and when looking back on His past mercies, fresh blessings have been added; renewed proofs that His loving favour rests on an implicit obedience to the command given in Phil. iv. 5, "Be careful for nothing: but in everything by prayer and supplication, WITH THANKSGIVING, let your requests be made known unto God." When fear and unbelief return, the remedy still is—Look up, oft, ever, at Jesus, and praise.

CHAPTER V.

Our Coffee-Stall.

When I said, "My God forgetteth,
Leaves His child, and knows me not;"
Then amidst the silent darkness
Was the sword of victory wrought.

TOO often we may have been inclined for one passing moment to think, as we laboured in the "fields white unto harvest," "my God hath forsaken me!" but how quickly, in one uplifting of the eye of faith, often one note of praise, or one outstretching anew in obedience to the Divine command of the "withered hand," there has been success, so marvellous, so supernatural, so Divine, that we have been compelled to humble ourselves in shame before Him.

A few years ago I was returning one Sunday afternoon from a room in the lower part of the town, where I had just been reading the Bible to a number of the poor people. Amongst others, the working-men had formed a large and very attentive portion of the audience. Many of them had been standing the whole time, unable to get seats. As we were walking home through the streets, one of

the devotedly Christian men of our town was with me. He was always at this little meeting, encouraging and helping it by every means in his power, and not least by his consistent influence. As we walked down the street together, he pointed out to me a gang of men who were slowly sauntering away from the door of the room which we had just left. They had all been at the meeting, and were slowly making their way home.

"Do you see that tall man in the group?" asked my friend, adding, "If you could get *that* man changed, it would be doing some good in the town."

As I looked at the figure indicated, I noticed the man, taller than the rest, walking with an easy, slouching gait, and dressed in very dirty working clothes.

"He is always at the public-houses," continued my friend, "and is quite a leader among the other men. On Sundays and on week-days you might see him at the public-house. He almost lives there, drinking away all his money. He seems a favourite, too; and I have no doubt that if he were changed his example would have a great effect."

My informant then expressed his great surprise that such characters as these should attend any *meeting where* the Scripture was read, and re-

marked that he "shouldn't think that J—— had ever been inside any place of the kind before."

By this time we had overtaken these men, so I crossed over to the place where they were walking, and said to them, "I was so glad to have you with us to-day. Do you think you will come again?"

Then specially accosting J——, I said, "Will *you* ever come again to the Sunday afternoon meeting?"

"Come again, I should think I would!" he replied in the sort of downright tone for which he is famous. "Come again! why I never heard nothing like it in my life afore. *I'll* come next Sunday, and bring these other chaps along with me—if they'll come," he added slowly, looking at his companions with a funny, quizzical look of inquiry as he spoke.

"Very well," I said, "that is all right so far; but it is not enough. I want you to come to the LORD JESUS CHRIST. Give HIM your heart. It is not enough to come to the meetings. Come to that blessed Lord Jesus of whom you have been hearing at the meeting. I want Him to *save* you."

"Thank you," said the tall man, who seemed quite accustomed to acting spokesman for the rest. "We'll think about it; and I'll not forget you," he added, as I turned away.

From that time J—— always came to the

meetings, generally bringing with him a number of other men, whom he would beckon forward with his thumb over his shoulder, saying in a stage whisper, "Come on! come along, I say"—as he detected some inclination in one of his followers to draw back at sight of the assemblage before them—"Come on! there's plenty of seats. There now! you'll be all right," and with a manner of patronage and entreaty combined, J—— would get his friends seated, if possible, in the best part of the room. Then he would sit down amongst them with his arms folded, listening with the utmost attention, and a devoutness condemnatory of many a rich and learned gentleman in his crimson-cushioned pew. Poor J——! he was the delight of our hearts at the Sunday meetings, and as great a comparative sorrow on other occasions, for he still drank away his time and money, and was ruining himself and many more at those fearful dens of evil and temptation — namely, the public houses. Many and many a time I spoke to him on every sort of occasion, whenever and wherever I met him, in fact, but with no apparent effect. He kept faithfully to the meetings on Sundays, and as firmly to his sins during the week.

When our coffee-room was opened, he expressed *great delight in it*, and was a very frequent

attendant. But still he clung to his old companions, and still he continued drinking and treating the others to drink. His replies, when I expostulated with him, were so singularly candid, that one could only like the man for his honesty, and heartily desire and pray that he might become entirely changed by God's Almighty power. We were helpless before him.

"You see, Miss," he said one day, looking up at me with the most extraordinary mixture of gravity and satire; "You see, Miss, you never was a coalheaver. Was you, now?"

Being somewhat thrown off my balance, as I generally was by his answers to my exhortations, I was obliged with the same honesty to answer—for his questions admitted of no evasion, even if I had been anxious to find a loophole of escape—"Well, no; I can't say I ever have."

His profession was that of carting coals. Having therefore obtained my confession that I had never been a coalheaver, he informed me gravely that as such was the case, I could not possibly enter into either the necessities or the temptations of his position.

"With all the dust of the coal in your face," he said—and then followed a whole string of reasons why he *did*, and *must* drink; these pathetic arguments being each accompanied by a very

sympathetic shake or nod of his head, and the same irresistible look of fun and gravity mingled. These unconquerable excuses, if they were such, would invariably wind up with the solemn and emphatic decision, "Don't you see, Miss! a coalheaver *can't* be a Christian."

Driven thus into a corner, I used to entreat—"Then *don't* be a coalheaver. Get something else to do."

"*Must* work for my living," was his solemn reply, and here our conversation too often ended; though many times I had told him of the all-sufficient grace which could keep him from sin, if he would but seek it, and of that One who was both able and willing to "deliver him from evil," even in his present circumstances.

I always felt that too much pressure must not be used, and that argument was not the weapon to be employed in his case. It was quite evident that with him reason was already on the right side, as in many another, but that what was needed was a change of *heart*, and a view of both his sin and his Saviour. We prayed much for this man, and longed more than ever to see him enlisted in the great army, knowing that his influence in the town amongst a certain class was considerable, and that the *double* life he was now *leading must be* an injury to many.

At last J—— began to avoid meeting me, and though he still came regularly to the coffee-room and to some of the meetings, he contrived either to come at an hour when he thought I would not be there, or to escape before I could detect his presence.

"I does all I can to dodge ye!" he one day said most frankly.

One could not help smiling at his extreme candour, and his amusing way of expressing himself.

All this time he was, while drinking at the bar, constantly saying to the other men as well as to the publican himself, "You know we shall all be *lost* if we go on like this! It's true! Yes. Quite true. I am sure of that. We had better give it up.

And in the coffee-room we used to see him in close and earnest conversation with some poor creature far more degraded in appearance than himself, most earnestly entreating him to give up the drink.

"Oh! I say, J——," some one would remark, "it is very fine for you to talk. Look at yourself!"

"Yes, I *know*," would be his instant reply; "I know I am all wrong, but that don't make no difference, I want *him* to try on the right way;" always at the "him," giving a jerk of his head towards his friend, and an indication from that favourite and useful thumb in the same direction. In answer to an expostulation from some looker-

on, he would reply, "Well, I hope I shall be better *some* day!" and then would gracefully retire from the conflict, always leaving the opponent to smart under a sense of having been worsted in the fight.

He was a great favourite with G—— and with many of our men, who liked him for his frank goodhumour and native honesty, as well as his warm support of the rooms on every occasion and in all company.

At last there came a time when, in God's great mercy, J—— was to shake off the old life, and come out truly on the Lord's side. Thus it came about. I had long been anxious to try the effect of a coffee-stall in the town, partly for the good of the people in our immediate neighbourhood, but also that I might know how to recommend it to others, who were interested in the same sort of effort. Now, a loan of a coffee-stall was offered to me, with the option of purchase at the end of six months. I most gladly accepted this, and though from the alterations necessary, and the essential addition of a pony to draw it, it has been the cause of no little expense, I cannot but feel that the introduction of the coffee-stall has been a great blessing as well as convenience to the place. As to this statement I have the confirming testimony *of the tradesmen,* as well as the working-classes.

But I am getting beyond my tether, and must return to the arrival of the coffee-stall. Great was my disappointment when I beheld a very dirty and dilapidated little cart, painted in a kind of unattractive yellow hue, and bearing, partly effaced, the title, "Church Temperance Society," a list of foods sold being pasted in dingy lines down its sides.

"Oh! G——," I said, "we must hide this little concern. Don't let anybody see it, *please*."

G——'s silence gave consent; and I retired to consider what was to be done.

That night we were to have a tea for some of the people in the town who were not in the habit of spending their evenings well, or of going to any place of worship. I had intended to introduce the coffee-stall then and there, but finding this was impossible, a way must be made out of the difficulty. So, after the tea, when one or two hymns had been sung, and the people were expecting me to speak, I told them I had invited a little friend to come and visit them, but that at present he had on such shabby clothes that I could not introduce him. "But by-and-bye, as soon as he has a new pinafore on, and a little red frock, he shall come and see you." The people were greatly amused, laughed most heartily, and were evidently very anxious indeed to hear the end of the story; so I

continued, "But my little friend is very shy, and is greatly afraid of being given the cold shoulder. He is such a nervous little creature (here they shouted with laughter), that if he thought you did not like him, he would take to his heels and run away directly."

"Oh, he can run then!" said a voice near me.

"Yes! he has no legs, but that does not matter. He can toddle along well enough; and all he wants is a little encouragement before he makes his appearance."

Shouts of laughter again. "Yes, we'll encourage him. Where is he?"

"Oh! you must not be in such a hurry. He is a very quiet person, and likes to do everything in a very leisurely and dignified manner. As he is not dressed to-night, he cannot possibly appear before so many people. But if you are all going to be as friendly to him as you are to everybody else at the coffee-rooms, he will come and meet you beside the Post-Office on Saturday night at seven o'clock."

Now, the curiosity of my audience was thoroughly roused, and they began to clap in a suppressed manner, and to ask, "What is it?" The expression on their faces was most amusing, and they were evidently ready to support anything *that might be* proposed.

"IT!" I said. "Do you call my friend *it?*" "Now I am going to tell you his name. My friend is A COFFEE-STALL!"

Tremendous applause, and very hearty and smiling responses followed this revelation, and quantities of hands were held up to signify approval.

I then told them that there was one difficulty in my way at present, namely, that I had not been able yet to find a man who would take the charge of it, and sell the coffee; but that I had no doubt we should be able to arrange everything by Saturday. I then explained to them that coffee and other viands might by this means be supplied to them early in the morning before going to their work, in the evenings, and if necessary, at the dinner-hour also.* They promised their hearty support, and after some more hymns and some earnest words about their present needs and future welfare, the party separated.

The next morning I went down to the coffee-room, and asked G—— in which direction I should look for a man. We had asked several, but all had refused, saying they "did not like to be chaffed," and "did not want to carry a tea-

* The stall was intended to stand at the corner of a much frequented street, at the opposite end of the town from the coffee-room.

kettle about the streets." As they all seemed so shy about it, I had begun to think we must employ a man from a distance, which however would have greatly spoilt my plan, as I wanted it to be taken about by one of our own men who was well-known in the town.

G—— said, in answer to my question, "Who do you think has offered for it, Miss?"

Great was my surprise when he then informed me that J—— had offered his services as coffee-stall man.

"I think he would be the very person," continued G——, "we shall not find a better. He has signed the pledge this morning, has given up his other work, and has been across to the publican opposite, and said goodbye to him." . . .

Just at this moment in came J——. "How is this?" I asked. "Are you in earnest?"

"Never was more in earnest in my life," was his emphatic reply, as he sat down by a table and folded his arms. "I likes to do the *whole* thing while I am about it. I can't do a thing by halves. I've took a fancy to that 'ere little shop, and I'd like to look after it."

Very little more could be got out of him, beyond a very decided assent, when we said that it was impossible for him to keep these new resolutions *in his own strength.*

"You must pray for grace, J——."

"I have done that," he shortly replied, "and I *will*."

We had prayer together, and I looked at his signature in the pledge-book. I told him I would consider the matter; and for that morning we parted. G—— however had set his affections on J——, and in very short but decided arguments strongly advocated his immediate engagement. After a day or two had elapsed, during which I had thought well over the subject, J—— became our coffee-stall man.

The stall in the meantime was in the hands of the painter. Our first business was wholly to obliterate the words, "Church Temperance," and for this reason. The Dissenters would have considered it a party concern, and that it was not for *them*. The drunkard, or the sober man, who objected to the subject of "temperance," would have walked a good distance before he thus put his prejudices in his pocket, and tasted a cup of "temperance" coffee. So the two words, which I knew would be as obnoxious to our desired customers as a red flag in the eyes of a bull, were quite removed. The stall was painted a rich crimson colour, relieved by white borderings. In the centre of each side was placed a large print notice of the coffee-room, and on each side of

this advertisement two texts also in good plain print. These three printed tablets were placed under glass in frames, and were nailed securely to the stall. Two fresh wheels were added to it, and shafts appended; for the stall filled with crockery and eatables was too heavy a weight for a man to draw comfortably, and especially to any distance. A small pony was therefore bought, and soon the whole arrangement was complete.

We started with flying colours. On Saturday night, J—— appeared in the market-place with his new charge. He had doffed his coal-black garments, and arrayed himself in a new suit of entire white—white felt hat, white linen jacket, and trousers. A more complete metamorphosis could not be imagined. He was changed "outside and in," as he himself expressed it. I was telling him one day that I liked his white clothes very much, and greatly admired his taste.

His answer was, "Do you, Miss? So do I. It looks nice, don't it? And then they can see me ever so far off!"

"Do you mean the people in the street?"

"Yes, Miss; that's what I mean."

"That is what astonishes me about you, you don't seem to mind how much ple look at you. Do they chaff you

"Oh, I don't mind *that!* I can give *it* them back."

"Yes," said G——, when I told him about it afterwards; "he says their chaff does him good. It strengthens him!"

It certainly sounded a strong tonic, and not one that would usually be welcomed, especially by a working-man, perhaps, where generally one finds such great sensitiveness as to open ridicule. The stinging reproaches used by these poor men to one another, when anything like a decided change in life and habit has taken place, can hardly be realised by those who are accustomed to the restraints of society, and the shield at least of outward politeness. Merciless words, if not blows, are too often hurled at the unfortunate victim, who naturally enough succumbs to the difficulty, and shrinks from the encounter. Beset on one side by contempt and abuse, and on the other by redoubled efforts to re-attract the lost prey once more within the sin-gilded meshes of temptation, how can we wonder that all the united love and zeal of the Christian philanthropist, and these supported by DIVINE STRENGTH, is needed for such a work as the reclamation and reformation of the masses of our town and country population! The more one considers the matter, the more it must

be owned that each conversion from sin to holiness, from death to life, must be indeed a MIRACLE OF GRACE. Without the only true weapons, how can we perform a lasting work—a work that will stand, in each individual case, the wear and tear of a working-man's life?

"Well, J——," he was accosted by an admiring crowd on the first night of his appearance in his new office, "I hope you think you look nice there." He was standing inside the coffee-stall serving out the coffee as fast as he could make it.

"To be sure I do! I know that; and so would you if you had a chance."

This reply produced a good-humoured laugh from the crowd, and the attacker was evidently in the minority, for "Give us a cup of coffee, old chap," was heard in various directions, "there's the pennies for you."

"He's getting on first-rate," said a group of men and women encouragingly to me as I came up. "I think it will do very well," said another; while a third informed me, "He does it in grand style; you could not have got a better man. He stands there like one of them selling jacks, a clattering his cups, and calling out to 'em. It's a rare sight; and they all gets round him, and he *jokes away with* 'em, and then he comes it down

so sharp, 'Have a cup of coffee, Jim,' and they can't help taking it."

One man said to him, "Don't go on like that; come and have some beer with us, like you used to."

"No, thank you," replied J——, "I've had enough of that. You try half-a-pint of coffee. Nothing like it!"

When I was talking to him a few days after about the misery the drink was bringing upon the people, he said, "It would soon have brought me to the cemetery. I was getting all like that," and he shewed me his hand shaking. We may thank God when we see a powerful young man thus turned in the very prime of life from being the victim and channel of evil to an engine for good for his fellow-men.

As he stands and serves, J—— prays for his customers. In the silence of his own heart, under no roof but the blue sky extended over him, he "makes mention" to the King of the heart-needs of our little town.

J——'s retaliation on the publican who had so long known him as his most generous customer, when he first heard the strange news of his desertion in favour of our ranks, ought not to be omitted here.

"How is this, J—— ?" inquired the publican,

as he greeted his old friend striding *past* the terrible swing door for the first time. "Where are you going? Come in here, and I'll give you a day's work in my garden."

"Much obliged to you, Mr F——," replied J——, "I don't want a job in your garden, and now GOOD-BYE; I wash my hands free of this house and the whole lot of you," and suiting his action with great energy to the words, he retired from the scene.

J——, attired in his self-chosen white livery, daily stands at the corner of the street doing his happy work. Long may he live! serving the true King, and bringing blessing to the people.

CHAPTER VI.

Temperance.

Singing for Jesus, singing for Jesus,
  Trying to serve Him wherever I go;
Pointing the lost to the way of salvation—
  This be my mission, a pilgrim below.
When in the strains of my country I mingle,
  When to exalt her, my voice I would raise;
'Tis for His glory, whose arm is her refuge,
  Him would I honour, His name would I praise.

IN these days of strong reaction from the fearful indifference which has hitherto pervaded the men and women of our land as to the sin of intemperance, we cannot but feel that the Temperance movement is one of the greatest importance: so important is it, that surely all care should be employed in the conduct of such a movement. Without entering into the question, "Is total abstinence positively commanded in the Bible?" we want to know in all teaching what shall be the paramount object of that influence or teaching? How shall it tend? The too ardent temperance advocates will often appear in their great work almost, if not quite, to *ignore* that any further reformation is needful for the drunkard than that he should give up his drink, or for the sober man than that his one or two glasses of wine or beer should be resigned. Even if this is not considered by the

leaders of the movement, in any given place, to be the first and last necessary result of self-denying labour amongst the people, too often, alas! the colouring or stamp of such an opinion is thrown over their work, and a distinct impression of this kind conveyed to the onlookers by the terrible neglecting, laying to one side, of the *only* teaching that can conduce to a true reformation of any sinful creature on our earth. When we look into this matter quietly, the truth is self-evident; and when we search the Scriptures for light on this matter, God's will is plain. HIS remedy, and the only remedy surely for any sin, is the "GRACE OF OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST." It seems, therefore, a strange thing that at the present moment hundreds of excellent men and women should be opening as it were a dispensary for the needs of man in all his misery, need, and distress, and from that charitable organisation omitting—indeed sometimes strongly negativing —THE "balm of Gilead," the ONLY gift by which the dire disease can be healed. In reply to this, many would say, "But if we can only get the people to abstain, they are then in a fit state to *receive* the grace of God." How many *have* abstained and have fallen back again ten times deeper into the mire, for *lack* of the grace of God!

After speaking at a meeting one evening in a

distant town, I thanked a working-man for helping to shew the people their seats, and for having taken a good deal of trouble to make the room comfortable for us; and finished my thanks by saying to him, "I hope *you* have got this great SALVATION" (of which we had been talking). "Me!" he said in great surprise, "I don't need it, I have got temperance."

Where the stress is too much laid on this point, I fear that poor man's delusion would be found too often repeated, though perhaps not always in so many words. We ought, I think, to be very careful indeed that in none of our work we should give the impression that any *one* point of morality, or indeed *every* point of morality, is in our opinion of equal value with gospel truth; or that any amount of sobriety, with other virtues, can be all-sufficient for the human soul. There is but ONE who can say, "I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life." Believing in Him we have *from Him* the "Spirit of truth," who, by His holy anointing power, can make us holy, with an imparted righteousness.

On the other hand, if kept in its right place, the Temperance movement cannot have too great a value. In this place we have found it useful as an addition to all our Scripture work. Poor men who have hitherto been drunkards, now find

it a great safe-guard. Others, too, who have not been drunkards, but who have occasionally been led into bad company, or into a fit of drinking by the invariable "half-pint," which is so popular, are now placed on a new footing, surrounded by new and better friends, and are respected and respectable as they never were before they entirely renounced the public-house and the joy of beer.

My readers would have been amused if they had seen the hearty fit of laughing amongst our men after my description to them of an attack made upon me in a drawing-room the other evening, after dinner, by a gentleman and a lady as to my unfairness in even suggesting temperance as likely to be beneficial to the village over which we had just been lamenting, on account of the melancholy state of its working-men.

"A coffee-room *without* BEER!" said both in one voice.

"Well, that *is* what I call hard!"

"And would you deprive the poor man of his beer? his little comfort, his one pleasure!"

Beer and spirits have been so freely distributed throughout England, that the prevalence of the liquor has become our national curse. Men and women are dying of the disease. Our streets are *groaning* under the burden of "darkness that *may be felt.*"

Shall we not strive to divert the tide of thirst into other channels? to provide the people with purer pleasures? to give them mental and spiritual delights? and to provide food and drink that cannot injure, but must sustain.

If doctors, magistrates, clergymen, ministers, tradesmen, laymen, and ladies, would alike put their shoulder to the wheel, and by self-denying example, with laborious effort and persuasive power, urge on the cause of total abstinence, renouncing from their tables, their bedrooms, and their districts the draught which has, alas! become an engine of Satanic power, and a medium to such multitudes of swift destruction, THE LORD WOULD BLESS, and that "above all we ask or think," the effort for His glory. A united movement is needed. Let all sects and classes strive *together* in each town, village, and country side, in the name of Jesus, to suppress even moderate drinking, and heaven and earth will soon have cause to rejoice in sweet accord over captives set free, temptations removed, and hearts and homes alike made glad by the entrance of prosperity and peace.

In our earnest desire to reach the drunken men of this town, we have adopted the following plan, which, I think I may say on each occasion has proved successful in the full sense of the word.

men have been won and reclaimed. We ask some of our men who *have* been public-house frequenters to take some tickets of invitation to their old haunts, or in the street to their old companions. These tickets admit to a free tea. Here our guests enjoy a good meal, they hear the lively and pathetic hymns of which we now may find so large a choice, the hand-bells, musical-boxes, and some earnest words about their souls, the evils of drinking, and the blessed alternative of a new and happy life. The bright room, kind faces, and Scripture verses, leave a new impression on the poor sin-hardened ones, and they are soon drawn into the meetings and coffee-rooms by the attractive element brought to bear upon them, and the LOVE of God in Christ which has been put before them. Cases of real success might be instanced here, and touching narratives given of those who are now living a life of holy influence amongst those who formerly knew them as open sinners. But the histories would be so recognisable, that one must refrain from putting on paper many of these marvellous miracles of the grace of God.

I may venture to mention one who was only partially an instance of the advantage of this *method* of winning the lost ones.

A very frightful tragedy, which cannot be fully

related here, had taken place in a small cottage from the effects of drink, the author of it being often as dangerous as the worst of lunatics through its horrible and fascinating power. "He is always more or less drunk," the neighbours would say of him. Another would calmly remark, in the spirit of "the Levite" of the gospels, that "it was not safe to go near him." Alas! with that wretched unbelieving fear, which so often spoils what might have been a successful task, had we listened to other than the voice of man, I had never ventured near him. Now I knew the man must be miserable indeed, and more ardently than ever I longed to find him. The only answer I could get to my inquiries as to his whereabouts was, "He is drinking somewhere in one of the public-houses." *Which* public-house it was no one could tell me.

At last I met an Irish acquaintance, to whom I put the same question, "Can you tell me where R—— is to-day?"

I had good reasons for thinking he might be able to answer me.

"Och!" he said, in his Dublin brogue; "och now! don't you ask me any questions at all about him. Don't now! He's a bad boy, that's what he is; and not fit for a young lady like you to be looking after."

"Never mind that," I said, "I want to find him; and I want you to tell me where he is."

"Whatever do you want to know that for? He's just a naughty boy. You had better let him alone."

"Does the Lord want us to let him alone? Does not the Lord Jesus love him in spite of all his sins?"

He looked solemnized at this, but not convinced.

"The Lord Jesus said He had come on purpose to seek and to save that which was lost, so I want to find the man and comfort him."

"Sure, and he doesn't want any comfort at all. Just let him alone; and go for a nice drive."

"Let him alone!" I said; "would that be right?"

"Well! if you were to find him, what would you say to him?"

"Tell him of the SAVIOUR!" I said, "and tell him that Jesus loves *him*, and wants to save *him* from all his sins."

"Och!" he said, turning away with a look of unspeakable disgust—and he was one of the kindest-hearted men I ever saw—"Good-bye then, and I'll *not tell ye!*"

On the following night we were to have a tea *for that special* class, the men who spend their

evenings in the public-house. Invitations were issued thus: twelve reclaimed men, now devoted and happy Christians, were to have tickets *ad libitum*, which they were to distribute among their old companions, and in the public-houses and beer-shops, quite free of course. This plan answered admirably, and a goodly number were usually assembled on such occasions.

On the evening of my conversation with the Irish acquaintance, we were to have our usual weekly prayer-meeting with the people. So strong an impulse seized me to ask their sympathy and prayers for this poor man, that I did so, mentioning him by name, a very wrong thing I am sure, to do, as a rule. On this occasion, however, no harm was done, and very fervent prayers were offered for poor R—— that he might be brought to the rooms, and that his heart might be changed. For fear my readers should be expecting too much, I must say here that the last part of our prayer that night has not yet been answered, I fear.

On the next night my guests were assembling for their tea, being marshalled to their places by most respectable and well-dressed men, so changed, that the "old companions" must have been struck with the metamorphosis accomplished by the power of Divine Love and Truth, who in

the kindest manner welcomed the others, and saw them seated. The room was nearly full, when a poor creature whose face, red and bloated, told too plainly of his way of life, came up to me, with evidently some most important piece of news to impart. In the highest spirits he beckoned me to come across the room.

"Look here!" he was saying; "here he is, I have got him for you. See him? He's a-sitting at that table!"

"Who do you mean?" I said, hardly thinking it could by any possibility be R——. I had never seen him before.

"Why, I mean R—— to be sure! Him you said you wanted last night. (My friend had not been present at the prayer-meeting of the evening before, but no doubt the report was carried to this poor creature that I wanted to see his drinking-mate, and so he had brought him.)

"I *thought* you would be pleased," he continued. "I knew you would be glad if we could catch him, so I just got him. See! he knows me. He wouldn't mind coming with the likes of us."

By this time I found myself in proximity to the designated man who was pointed at thumb over shoulder by his introducer—"That's him!" And then a slap on his back to make him turn round *and speak to* me.

"Oh, R——!" I said, "you did not know how much I cared for you. I have been wanting you a very long time. All our people here will love you, and be so kind and friendly with you, if you will only come and see us in the evenings. You have had so much trouble. I have been very, very sorry for you, and have prayed for you many times the last few days, and before that too."

Poor fellow! he was quite overcome at this sudden onslaught, so I left him to have some tea, and then returned to the attack afterwards.

"When will you come again?" I said to him.

"To-morrow night," he whispered. "What's on then?"

"Night school," I whispered back.

"Do you teach yourself?"

"Yes, one class; you shall come into it if you like. Would you like that?"

"Yes, I'll come."

From that time that man dated an entire change in his life. He gave up all his old habits, though, alas! not all his old friends; and he still refused, unfortunately, to come to the *meetings* until he could be as well dressed as if he were going to the church. For six months he was firm (outwardly) in his better ways, and then the doctor told him he looked very weak, and must

have "a little stimulant, not too much;" from that day he has been plunged in fearful wickedness, going down hill as fast as he can. But his love for us and for the coffee-room is still so great that I feel it is a means which might be used of God at any time, if it were His most gracious will, to deliver him. The passion for drink was too strong. Nothing but total abstinence could have saved him from a life of vice, and that of course only if blessed to him by the Lord, with an entire change of heart as well as of outward life.

Many of our men who have themselves derived benefit from the temperance cause, are most anxious to induce others to carry the same badge, and to obtain the same reward, namely, prosperity, comfort, and immunity from countless evils and numerous temptations. Having formerly sought to draw their associates into the sin which had so enslaved them, they now began to desire to persuade other men to sign the pledge, to "give up the drink," to "make 'emselves comfortable," and so on. So it was proposed, "Why should you not make use of the rooms one evening in the week, and talk these matters over? There you might encourage one another, and perhaps draw in other men to take advantage of your experience." This *suggestion* met with great approval, and thus our *temperance*, or rather total abstinence meetings

commenced. We admitted no "moderate drinkers" as members; the men, who were in downright sober earnest on the subject, considering this as a farce or parody on the stern reality of the evil, and a kind of unpardonable attempt at escape from that which they considered the only remedy for the disease.

Our temperance meetings grew very fast, and became popular. Temperance teas were monthly institutions. For these the members paid freely. On such occasions after the tea, the room was opened, glees sung to the public, poetry and dialogues recited, and speeches made by those present, or by strangers invited for the occasion. Now this movement has developed, after many and varied phases, into a much larger and more important society than appeared likely at first, through the aid and co-operation of the other individuals as well as societies in the town; a gentleman of influence having taken a most kind part in allowing himself to be instituted our chairman.

To shew the willingness of our hearers to adopt any measure proposed for their benefit in this matter, I might cite the following anecdote as an instance. I told the people one evening that I had been staying with some friends in a neighbouring county a few days before, where a number of

navvies were working on the line, and in words something like these described an incident with which I had been charmed:—

I had been watching these men working on the line, and had taken them some books and papers, when as I was returning home, my friend asked me to turn to the left, through a little country lane which led to some fields. Here we met an old man with flowing white locks, whiskers and beard. He was carrying two pails slung from a wooden yoke across his shoulders. After some conversation, giving a nod in direction of the navvies, he said, "They do drink a lot. I has rare work going up and down to 'em!"

"What do they drink?" I asked.

"Why, this 'ere oatmeal and water," he rather consequentially replied, "and I carries it to 'em."

"Do they like that?" I said. "How do you make it?"

"Why!" he slowly replied, "o' coorse they *do* like it! Let's see, this is twelve o'clock. There is a hundred-and-twenty men at work. Some of 'em began work at half-past four, and some at six, this morning, and I've carried 'em *forty gallons*. Its rare thirsty work, that picking on the line.—Want to see how I make it? Well, here's the pump, and there's the pails, and here's a lot o' *oatmeal*. Half-a-pint o' oatmeal goes to a gallon

o' water, and it's made! Yes; the contractors *gives* it to 'em. There ain't nothing to pay. They keeps me busy, I can tell you."

This dear grandfatherly old man looked most bewitching while he told the story, and I was emboldened to ask the question which was uppermost in my mind.

"But don't they want *beer* for their work? Will they take this oatmeal and water *instead* of beer?"

The old man's eyes were opened very widely, and fixing upon me his astonished gaze, he slowly allowed his buckets to descend from his shoulder, as he said in solemn and emphatic accents—

"It's very hard work they have to do, taking out the earth from the cutting, and shovelling it into the trucks, and all day at it. Why, they couldn't *do it* on beer, it 'ud *mopify* 'em so."

"Well, that *is* grand!" I said. "Will you tell me again what the beer would do to them?"

"Why, they'd be *mopified*, to be sure!" he said. "They couldn't do it on beer."

"That is a splendid story," I said. "See if I don't tell it to the people at the next temperance meeting in D——."

The relation of this interview with the old man produced peals of laughter and great applause at the said temperance meeting; but the results did not end there.

At the inquiry meeting on the following Sunday evening, I saw a man who at intervals had been making me anxious by his habit of yielding to the inclination to drink. A tall, strong-looking fellow, there he stood, with his clean white jacket and fustian trousers.

"How are you getting on?" I whispered.

"First-rate this week!" he replied. "I went and got some oatmeal and mixed it with water, and it stood me instead of beer. I took *a deal* of notice of what you said about the old man the other night. It took my fancy, that did"—and then he smiled—and shaking his head sagaciously, said, "I wish the farmers would do the same. I wish *they* would take notice of it, and do just like them contractors."

"Well," I replied, "you and I must be *firm*, and say 'NO' to the temptation, and perhaps some day we shall see them all helping us."

"I hope so," repeated my friend, rather dubiously, I think.

Two or three weeks afterwards I saw him in the coffee-room on a Saturday night, clad in nice comfortable-looking clothes. A very thick cloth jacket had replaced the white one, and he now looked a well-dressed man.

"How have you got on *this* week?" I asked him.

"VERY well, I thank you!" he replied.

"No drink?" I asked.

"No! quite steady," he answered; "you would not see these on my back (taking hold of his jacket, by way of demonstration, as he spoke) if it had not been for the oatmeal. I havn't forgotten about the old man yet."

Several others have expressed their fervent desire that I would make this story known to their employers here.

Should it be useful in even suggesting an improvement in the kind of liquor supplied to the men when at their work, my old man may think his information was not bestowed in vain.

I have known coffee-rooms fail through the injudicious pressure of this point. "Oh, my good man! now sign the pledge. *Do* sign it; there's a good fellow! Just *try* it." The unfortunate victim of such persuasions of course escapes, determined never to enter the place again. And who can wonder? Then, well-meaning young ladies will enter the room full of best intentions, but perfectly ignorant of the true wisdom in dealing with these men, or, indeed, with *any* man, for they appear to have forgotten the simple little bond of ordinary social life, with its barest courtesies—"Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye

even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets." Matt. vii. 12. Pledge-book in hand, I have known these young ladies persecute the unfortunate tired guests of the coffee-room, till, from a politeness which the ladies seem to lack, he says, "Very well, Miss, as you please!" and signs his name. Others follow his example, fully intending, perhaps, to give the new way a trial, or, more likely still, intending nothing at all but to be civil. The next evening that man is asked by his companions in the street, "Going down to the coffee-room to-night?" "No! Catch me going there again. They was all in for signing the pledge last night." And so he goes into the public-house.

We need tact and caution, and wit, in all our dealings with human souls. Nothing should be done to vex or give unnecessary offence.

We also need zeal, earnestness, diligence, self-denial, for this mighty struggle against a National Sin.

CHAPTER VII.

Another Railway Guard.

"In His good time,
The *last* rough wave shall bear me on its bosom
Into the haven of eternal rest.
No billows after! They *are* numbered, brother."
"Oh! gentle mariner, steer on, steer on,
My tears still flow for thee, but they are tears
In which faith strives with grief, and overcomes."

WHEN driving through a lane
noon, where curiously-shaped
of various ages and sizes
rest peacefully under
rich overhanging woods, themselves
shrubs, flowers, and creeping plants
the door of a small gable-roofed
bees were humming, the pet dove
children playing in the tiny garden
old grandfather, a "saint indeed"
years' standing, was walking across
little garden from the cowshed,
been finishing his day's work.
gave me that sweet sense of
enhances the pleasure of country
come to inquire after one
had been giving me some
neatsfoot oil.
old-fashioned little room,

wonderful and marvellous pictures of impossible scenes, the mother of the household introduced me to a young man sitting by the fire.

"This is another son," she said, "one you have not seen before; he is a railway guard, and this is his wife," bringing forward a young woman. We had a little talk about the defaulter first, and then I said to the guard, "You are a railway guard. I do admire those men! They are so brave and so hard-working, so regularly at their post; and we are so dependent for our lives on their good conduct. I can only say, for *my* part, that I am very grateful for your care of us."

He most modestly received my praise, saying, "Thank you, Miss. Of course we ought to do our duty; and I think most of us try to do it well. But we do not often hear the *public* say much about it!"

"Oh! well," I said, "if I am the 'public,' I am very much obliged to you, and very often think of you all, and *pray* for you too."

Some more general conversation followed, in which he said that he was employed on another line, and lived "handy to his work" in one of the suburbs of London, about two hours' journey from us.

"Now," I said, "I wonder if you have a

Friend who is *your* Guard and Guide—the Lord Jesus Christ! Do you know Him?"

"I do not know about that!" said the young man, looking appealingly to his wife for an answer to the question.

"Oh!" said the wife, bridling up in vindication of her husband's character, "he is a *very good* man indeed, and he is the best of husbands, and regular to his work. I am sure there is not much wrong with *him!*"

"You quite mistake me," I said. "I neither accuse him of being a bad man nor a bad husband. Very far from it. I am sure he is quite the reverse. I only want to know whether you both love the Lord Jesus, and are serving HIM. If Jesus Christ is your Friend, your hearts will be happy, and your home happy too, and your work blessed."

The young man was looking very earnestly at his wife, and then at me; at last he said—

"I'm afraid we don't go in for *that* kind of thing —not for *religion*, I mean, Miss."

His look, as he said this, I shall never forget.

"Shall we just kneel down and *ask* the Lord's blessing, then?" I said.

A moment's hesitation on his part, and then we all knelt and pleaded the good *gifts*—eternal life, present grace, joy and peace, success in work—promised to them that *ask* in the One given name.

When I left the house he told me he was only "at home," as he called it, for "a day's holiday;" he must return to work the next morning. So we parted, he very earnestly entreating me to come and visit the place where he lived, and talk to the people there, his wife adding her request, and saying that "there was nobody who thought much about religion there."

A year passed away, and then I was told one evening at the coffee-room that a guard of his name had taken lodgings in the town, and would like me to call upon him between two and four P.M. the next day if I could conveniently do so. I went, and there I found the handsome young guard sitting in his own little room, his wife working beside him. What a welcome he gave me! Poor fellow, I shall not easily forget the earnest manner in which he began telling me he had been "wrong all his life," and now wanted "to be saved." He said he hoped to be able to attend the meetings, and "take every opportunity of hearing," for he had "neglected these matters too long."

"We have never forgotten your talk with us," he said, "on that afternoon when you called in —— Lane. We have talked it over many times, and we thought it so kind of you to pray with us. *But now I* want to know what I am to do. I

cannot bear to put it off any longer. You see we have bought this Bible, and I have been studying it a great deal. I want SALVATION. I want to be sure of ETERNITY. How long do you think it will take before I can begin to be *sure?*"

"My dear friend," I said, "you are indeed at the very door this afternoon. The Lord has opened it wide, that you, a poor sinner, may enter in. Jesus Christ says, 'I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life' (John xiv. 6); and again, 'I am the Door; by me if any man enter in, he shall be SAVED, and shall go in and out, and find pasture' (John x. 9). When the jailor came to Paul and Silas, asking, 'Sirs, what must I do to be saved?'—just the question you have asked me—he was answered, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved, and all thy house.' THAT VERY NIGHT the jailor proved that he had obeyed this word, and in believing, had found the salvation he desired. Full of joy, he was baptized, washed the apostles' stripes, took off their fetters, and there and then began to live a new life. It did not take *him* long to believe and be saved! 'Come unto Me all ye that labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest,' Jesus says."

"I cannot believe it is so easy as all that," he said. "Eternal life seems to me like a steep hill

that you must climb. Heaven is at the top of it. I have been going down hill a long time—all wrong—and now I have got all the way to climb to the top. That stands to reason, doesn't it?"

"Yes, " it stands to reason, but God wants us to be saved BY FAITH."

Here the new Bible was produced, and some passages were searched out and marked for future reference. The little clock stood ticking away our time on the mantel-piece, and every now and then the man's eyes rested upon it, as though he feared we should not be able to finish our conversation.

"Good-bye," I said, "I must go. There is just one more text I should like to say to you before I leave. It is 'The wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord (Rom. vi. 23)." I brought you a present of this little book, (it was a daily text-book), and I should like you to accept it from me on this condition, that as you take it out of my hand, you will now take from God the gift of eternal life!"

He took the book solemnly and slowly from my hand, and then covering his face with his hands, said, "Let us pray—will *you* pray?"

We knelt down and thanked God for a gift *purchased for* us with the precious blood of Christ,

now made so freely ours by the offer and the promise continually repeated in His Word, and asked that we might have grace to do His will, and be kept daily very near His side, delivered from evil, made holy by His power.

The young man grasped my hand when we had finished, saying, "Do come again, very soon."

On the Sunday night I saw my two friends in one of the front seats, at the town hall meeting. There was no mistaking the look of beaming happiness, the freedom from care on the face of the guard. As we sang our concluding hymn, his soul as he looked upwards with a bright smile seemed to enter into the words—

"I *know* 'twill be heaven for me!"

After the meeting, I asked him how he had been getting on since I saw him.

"Oh!" he said, "it has been a wonderful week to me. Jesus has been with me all the time. While I have been in my work, Jesus has been with me."

"When was it all settled?" I asked.

"That afternoon when you came to see me, and brought me the offer of THE GIFT! I just took it when you offered it, and I AM glad! Nobody can ever take it away from me again, for it is ETERNAL life."

All this was told me earnestly, solemnly, and with pauses between, which told more even than the words he uttered.

From that time I was generally told each week what his hours off duty were, and used to go to his house accordingly when I had a few minutes to spare. On one of these visits I found him flushed and ill, suffering from sore throat. He said he had caught cold on one of his night journeys. The weather had been severe, and the cold rain and wind had "knocked him down," as he expressed it. He soon was better, and went to work again; but after three or four of these attacks, each increasing in its severity, he became quite prostrate, and the doctor told him he must never expect to go to work again. This was a terrible blow to poor F——, who little thought such a sentence was coming upon him.

He told me of it, in his quiet way, with the large tears filling his eyes.

"The doctor says I am not to work again! It does seem strange. I can hardly understand it; but I can just *believe*. It is the old story again; the same as at the first. I know it must be best, and must be right. But I feel as if I wanted some comfort to-day. I am glad you have looked in. Perhaps you would read a verse or two," and the *Bible was* handed to me.

Presently he said, "What a good thing it is that I accepted the *great* GIFT! Jesus has been with me ever since; and now He will never forsake me."

The strong inflammation in his throat and chest soon deprived him of his voice; but sometimes he used to whisper out to me fragments of his life as a railway guard.

"It's all over now," he used to say, "so I need not fret; but I do wish that we did not have so many temptations. I have often wished that our men that is on the line wasn't *treated* so much. Any young gentleman, you know, Miss, that's in a first class, and asks you to take his bag and that, for him, will call you in to the refreshment-room, and say, 'What will you take, guard?' then he treats you to a glass of something, and we don't like to refuse. Still, I don't see why we shouldn't say a civil, 'No, thank you, Sir.' It does seem a pity our guards is always being treated."

Many a time he poured out his heart, too, about the *Sundays*. I told him one day that I had heard that there was no Sunday work on some of the lines in America. He turned so quickly round to his wife, and said, "I should like to be there; wouldn't you?"

"Some day you will be in a better land," I said, "where there is no more toil—all rest, no

the 'shining shore'—where Jesus leads his people by the living streams."

"Oh yes! so it is. But lots of our men never think about that time at all. They don't think about heaven. It's more the other way. They seem so busy and so worried, and so taken up with one thing or another, that they don't seem to have a chance somehow; and"—shaking his head, and looking into the fire very gravely and sadly, he said—"AND NOBODY SEEMS TO TAKE AN INTEREST IN THEM. That's so strange, when you come to think of it. This is a lucky place, Miss," he continued; "they are cared for here."

"And so they are in some other places," I replied, "though I fear not very many. We will *pray* that God may incline many people to take an interest in the good of the railway-men."

A bright smile always came over his face when we alluded to prayer. He now knew the reality of *that*. But his anxieties about the other guards continued a heavy burden on his heart up to his death, which took place only three or four weeks after this conversation. He gradually became worse and worse, till at last my visits found him propped up on the pillows on his bed. How eager he was for reading and prayer. He used to stretch out such a thin, burning hand to welcome *me, and* generally began our interview with the

words, "Are you in a hurry?" or, "Have you got plenty of time to stay to-day?" One day when he was very weak and low, he pointed to a "lily of the valley" growing in a pot which I had brought him, knowing his great love for flowers, and said, "See! I have had it put in the light so that I can see every one of its little bells. Don't they look beautiful? they are just *pure* white. And there is the rose that came this morning. I love to look at them." The dark crimson rose was standing in a vase close beside the little white lily, and brought to my mind the verse in Canticles ii.: "I am the Rose of Sharon, and the Lily of the Valleys. As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters."

So I said to him, "Do you know that there is a verse in the Bible about these two flowers, and that *your* JESUS is said to be like both of them—the Rose and the Lily—and you are the lily?"

"Oh no!" he said, "I never heard that; surely it is not in the Bible."

I found the verses, and read them to him. His ecstasy of delight was beautiful to see. He always called his wife to share anything that pleased him, and in a moment she was at his bedside, while he, pointing with his wasted fingers and exerting his strength to the utmost, tried to tell her of this wonderful type.

"Don't you forget," he said to her; "we must try and tell everybody that comes." And so he did. The flowers, with their new teaching, were pointed out to the different friends who came in to see him the next day.

Some of his old companions were very kind in coming to see him, and "cheer him up," as they would say. But he only valued the visits of those who would help him to think about "heaven," as he often told us.

"I don't want them to talk worldly talk," he used to say; "I want to hear nothing more about worldly things. I am very soon going now, and I don't want them to draw me back."

Many times he lamented over the carelessness of his old companions, and earnestly asked prayer for them.

One afternoon, a few days before his death, he said to me, "I lie awake here for hours thinking about the other guards. I know such lots of them; and I do *long* for them to be changed. There are such lots of things I could say to them now."

"Would you like to see some of them, and just tell them what is on your mind?" I asked.

"Oh no!" he said, "I couldn't now. I have not breath. But will *you* give them my messages *when* I am gone? Tell them to think about

eternity, and come and hear about the Lord Jesus before it is too late; and tell them not to swear. Tell them I could not bear to think about it. Oh! some of them *do* swear so. It makes me tremble to think of the words I have heard them say."

I found him one evening fast sinking, labouring for breath, but so wondrously peaceful. He said, "I want to tell you something . . . . it is *so* good . . . . you'll like it. Yes! it is very nice. I hope I can tell it."

Then, with repeated pauses, and such singularly radiant smiles flitting across his face amidst all the look of pain which he so constantly wore, he told me the following little allegory, which I think he must have read in a tract entitled, "Is it sprinkled?"

"It was very late one night," he said, "when all the people were being taken ill—the eldest son, I mean, in every house—and it was a dreadful night. The destroying angel was expected to pass over the houses, and there was great trouble. Many people were crying, they were so afraid. But then they could be safe if they liked."

He here interrupted—"What was their name, Miss?"

"Egyptians," I answered.

"Yes! but I mean the others, who was told they need not be afraid, but just to put the blood on the door-post."

round with a look of inexpressible delight, he said very softly, "And then the child would say, 'Thank you, dear father, I am not afraid now. I will lay me down in peace and sleep, for thou Lord only makest me to dwell in safety.' That's ME! Under the *shelter of the blood*, you see; *that's it!* That's just where I am to-day—no fear—near midnight. *Such* peace!"

As his wife came in from another room, he said, "I have just been telling Miss C—— such beautiful things. I wish I could tell it again, but I can't, I am so weak." As he sank back to rest on the pillows, his wife burst into tears, saying, "Isn't he beautiful? and so patient! He is always like that now."

A night or two after this the poor young wife saw that the end had come, and in an agony of grief leant over him, saying, "Oh, my darling, you are just going. Will you give me one word to comfort me when you are gone, and I am left all alone?"

Gathering up his little remaining strength, he said, "Yes! I *will*. The Lord is YOUR Shepherd, you shall not want. As for me—

'Safe in the arms of Jesus,
Safe on His gentle breast;
There by His love o'ershaded,
Sweetly my soul shall rest.'"

Then with another effort, he said, "Tell Miss C——, BLESSED IS THE MAN THAT TRUSTETH IN HIM! I have found it so," quoting a text I had sent him in a printed letter a few days before.

And so the young railway guard passed into a home of eternal rest, where "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes, and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away."

He was sorely missed by many when he was taken, but he has left behind him a fragrance telling of joy in sorrow, light in the "valley of the shadow of death," and glory hereafter, the fruition of grace below.

When the funeral day came, a very large number of guards, and some other railway men, came down to pay their last tribute to the one who had been called from their number. They all had their tea at our rooms, after which each received some little books, a hymn was sung, and then I endeavoured to give the messages that had been entrusted to me; but the emotion of those present was so great, that I had difficulty in speaking. Earnest thanks have since been sent for the delivery of that message, and for the verses read at the meeting afterwards. The gratitude of these men for the smallest effort made on their

behalf teaches a lesson, I think, to those who travel. "Am I my brother's keeper?" Let us ask the LORD that question, and receive HIS answer, and act according to HIS will. Shall we not *pray* for these men? distribute regularly tracts, picture papers, gospels, and testaments? speak to them kindly on any opportunity, visit their families, and do our utmost to save their souls, as well as to benefit them temporally in every possible way? Let us hear the Master's voice calling, and we shall be glad to RUN in the path of his commandments.

We have had several railway meetings since for the men and their families, by their own request. Of the results we have but a foretaste at present, but we shall know more hereafter.

CHAPTER VIII.

The Cottage Hospital.

Scorn not thou the angel-wisdom
  Hidden with some little child,
Yet remember still the teaching,
  By earth's passion undefiled.
Truths that hedge some dusty waysides,
  Seek them reverently each one;
Light is in the little candle,
  But the glory in the sun.

HOW many of our English plants bloom, and bring forth fruit and seed, and die, and then rise again; a plentiful work being performed by each blossom in its own little season, while we as bystanders admire, but too seldom *praise!* We love the flower, we appreciate the skill of the human hand which has tended its little life; but we forget the *One* who *made* the beauty, *created* the life and fruitfulness, and *gave* the human heart and hand the needed powers for its culture.

"This is not the age of miracles," we hear from the lips of the man whose soul is paralyzed in a cold unbelief, called by many an elegant name, and whose eyes are blinded, alas! to the daily infinitude of miracles surrounding us, both spiritual and temporal!

Is not the flower a miracle? and is not the soul born again, renewed into a divine life, made holy,

who had just been laid in one of the clean white beds in a smaller ward. Flowers were arranged on the table in the centre of the room, and on the window-sills, while by his bed-side stood a single rose, with its dark-green leaf, welcoming the old man to his strange new home; but a temporary abode, it was true, yet none the less pervaded by the tender loving spirit of "home." All had been done to console and cheer the patient, before whom there lay, as the nurse whispered to me, the prospect of a painful and perhaps serious operation. "He does not know anything about it yet," she said; "he must have all the strengthening he can get before it is performed."

When I stooped over the bed, he knew me, and smiled; but soon the hot tears trickled over his cheeks as he said, "I am very ill, and I have left them all behind, all at home—the old wife, and the son, and all."

"But we will soon make you feel at home here," was my reply. "We all love you, and nurse is so kind and good."

"Ah, my dear, I'm *going* home!" was his answer. "That's my comfort; if it were not for that hope, I don't know what I should do. The pain will be over *some* day; and the Lord can sustain me while I am here, can't He?"

"Ah, dear friend, the Lord Jesus is with you; look up to Him, and wait very patiently."

"Just *pray*," said the old man, folding his hands very reverently. . . .

And then I left him.

At last there came the day when the operation was to be performed. He was trembling and tearful, with the undefined dread or anticipation of *something*—a vague something that was going to happen to him—but we were able to have a short conversation on his favourite theme, the love of Jesus, mingled with the bright prospect of the "many mansions" prepared for him above.

In the afternoon, about five o'clock, I called to inquire after our aged patient, and heard from the nurse the following account:—

"When the doctor came in," she said, "he asked if he was 'all ready,' and then was going to administer the chloroform; when the old man said, 'Please, sir, wait a minute, I want to get hold of my verse first.' Then with a clear voice he repeated the words: 'God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life' (John iii. 16). One moment, with bowed head and folded hands, he remained in silence, his lips moving; and then he looked *up at the* doctor, and said, 'Now, sir, I'm *ready*.'"

"Ready!" Yes; ready for life or death, for pain or ease, for sorrow or "strong consolation." Ready, the old man stood at that moment on the threshold of *eternity;* but it was a threshold paved with *blood*—the blood of the "only begotten" shed for *him*. And in that sweet confidence, that birth-place of peace, he could rest secure.

Dear reader! can we share this trust? Whether laid on an hospital bed, or occupied in a life of busy toil, or enjoying the luxuries of a prosperous life, can we look beyond to the goal of rest and say, "I *am ready*"?

Has our "hope" been cast, as an "anchor, sure and steadfast, within the veil," beneath the golden sands of promise, eternal as the heavens? Or do we rather stand and shrink from a free, full grasp of the remedy divinely provided for the sinner's need?

The old man was now lying peacefully on his quiet bed, telling us he had had a beautiful dream: "It was all heaven, so bright; it lasted such a long time, and Jesus so near. I be quite sorry I have come back," he said, smiling. "It was not *all* a dream, for Jesus is near." I said "Good-bye," and left the old man to his happy thought.

He lived a long time after this, and though he sometimes had "his doubts," as he called them

appropriately, they were generally soon dispelled, and his happiness restored by a slow and distinct repetition of the favourite verse (John iii. 16). At last he was called into the realms where his heart's affections had so long been set, and where he can no longer know the faintest echo of "pain," "sorrow," "death;" but the Lamb, the King, leadeth him by the living waters.

Oh, for the restful faith of this aged saint!

Would that some of the great ones — the Naamans of our land—might now be washed in that same fountain, enjoy that same hope, and be *satisfied* with the same eternal life-giving word!

. . . . . .

Old and young meet in the snug wards of our cottage hospital. Aged men and little children, the house-mother and the sickly babe, all find a welcome and a home within its walls. Last year a fair-haired boy, sickening with dropsy, was brought by his mother for the doctor's advice. It was soon determined that he must be an in-patient, and he was seated in an easy-chair by the fire. Notwithstanding all the care given him, he soon became much worse; and then for some weeks lingered in much agony on his little bed by the window, where he received daily and frequent visits from his friends. Through all his pain the *nurses* wondered at his patience; they often said,

"He is so good, he never complains;" but within that patience there lay a secret—it was confided one day to a friend, whose visits often cheered the little sufferer—the secret was this: "Jesus helps me to bear the pain." And there, though the victim of a cruel disease, he lay, sustained and comforted by the power of the Holy Ghost, who graciously manifested Jesus to his little heart, and so kept him in "perfect peace."

"Place a chair," he would say, as he saw one of us coming up to his bedside; and then would listen eagerly to a "new text" or a verse of a hymn, of which he would often ask the frequent repetition, until he knew it by heart, and "could think of it in the night," or "say it" to himself "by-and-bye."

At the close of our visits he generally made the earnest request, "Will you pray?" folding his little hands as we knelt beside him. Sometimes the little faltering voice would remind us to ask for *patience*. "More patience, please. Ask Jesus to make me very patient—the pain, you know; I *want* to be patient."

Little Freddy's prayer was heard, and he *was* patient; and his Father was glorified in his gentle suffering life for many weeks upon that hospital bed.

One day, when listening to the account of his

Saviour's sufferings in his stead on the cross at Calvary—"they put nails in His feet and hands, a crown of thorns on His head, and crucified Him. . . . ."

"Yes," interrupted the earnest little voice—"Yes, and they plunged a spear into *His* side!"

That little one had already learnt a lesson many a wise man has overlooked; he had learnt the *value of the blood* shed upon the cross for *us*, and had, by a simple unreasoning faith, *appropriated* the sacrifice—so perfect, so all-sufficient in its worth, sufficient to appease a just wrath against *sin*, sufficient to bring peace into the believing heart!

> "Rock of ages, cleft for me,
> Let me hide myself in Thee."

Yes, Freddy was sheltered there, *and he knew it;* and this blessed reality supported him through every phase of suffering up to the last moments of his little life here.

Many times he would ask, as the end drew near, "Do you think it will be long now?" "Pray that Jesus may take me away very soon."

On his birthday I found him crying, and on asking him what was the matter to-day, he said, "I prayed so much last night that Jesus would *take me to* be up there with Him before my birth-

day, and He has not done it;" adding, "but it will be soon now, won't it?"

He often talked of his mother, whom he loved tenderly, and often, too, expressed his earnest wishes that all he loved might come "to heaven too."

And thus he passed away. Called into the Saviour's arms through the furnace of trial; trial such as we, who murmur too often in the midst of mercies "new every morning," and before a table "loaded with benefits," know nothing of; a cup of bitterness to which *our* lips have never been pressed.

This may yet be our portion; who can tell? Let us seek to know that tender love which turns bitterness into "honey out of the flinty rock," which makes happiness still happier, and which brings peace even into the riven heart.

Standing once by the bedside of one of our hospital patients who was in extreme weakness and pain, I saw the nurse offer him a cup containing some bitter draught. As she put it to his lips, he turned away in disgust. For a moment the thought passed through my mind, "Will she force him to take it?" And then I saw her take from the other hand a lump of sugar which she stirred into the medicine. "Now," she said, with her kind cheerful voice, "Now, try it again."

The poor sick man obediently turned round, and as she put the cup to his lips, drank down the proffered draught, saying as he finished it, "Thank you, nurse; that is good! May I have some more?" She turned to me, and smiled at the success of her ministrations; but I left that bed-side, having learnt a happy lesson.

"Oh, nurse," I said, "you have taught me a lesson for life, and perhaps for eternity!" And as I went away, I told myself that though there may be sometimes bitterness in the daily cup, that cup may ever be sweetened, and evermore deeply sweetened by His *love*, Who "died that we might live," Who knoweth how to "speak a word in season to him that is weary," and Who "knoweth how to give good gifts to them that ask Him."

The hospital flowers live and bloom, and die, and live again.

We may faintly trace some outlines of their earthly past, but who can pencil the blessedness in which they dwell "before the face of Him who sitteth upon the throne"!

Passing by the bedside of one of the patients, I was told that I must not speak to him, as he was a Roman Catholic. This stern command I was obliged to obey during my frequent visits to the ward, though I often saw the wistful eyes of the

sick man in the further bed earnestly fixed upon me while I talked with the others. Poor W——! It seemed hard that through the tyranny of his priest he should be debarred from the life-giving streams of which the others might hear and partake if they would, he remaining, through the fault of another, the victim of an ignorant delusion. "*No* free salvation for poor W——!" I used to say to myself. "Is he *never* to know of that free access to the Father which gladdens my heart, and has become the one 'STRONG consolation' to many of these poor suffering ones?" This pressure of the man's needs, and the prohibition to myself with regard to him, so weighed upon me that I prayed for him constantly, and often read verses out of the Bible to the other patients in such a way that I knew he could *hear*, if he chose to listen. John iii. 16; 1 John i. 7; Isaiah lv. 1, and many other passages were thus read, simply commented on, and prayer offered within his hearing during his long illness. One day he called me to his bedside—"Come here, Miss," he said, "I have got something to say to you."

I went up to him, and he continued: "I had a dream last night. I thought I was in a great field where you were speaking to thousands of people, and you said, 'Oh, dear people! the pennies are all paid, and you have only to go

straight forward!' It did seem a comforting dream, and then I woke up."

Poor W—— and I had several talks after this by his own desire; but, alas! the chains of his religion are heavy to unclasp. May the DIVINE ONE of infinite power do for this poor darkened soul that which I have been unable to effect! That sentence seemed the one solitary gleam that in the stillness of night had shone into his mind, reflected, no doubt, from his own mental comparisons between the "Way" of which I had been reading, and the closed gates, mountains of penance, and multitudes of intercessors, which he had so delusively been taught to consider, lay between himself and the "sure hope" of a Heavenly Home.

CHAPTER IX.

Our Meetings.

Remember life! It is the truth of living
Of that great future meeting, depths untold
Of glory and of power, that is giving
To weary men the strength that wears not old:
In life's deep fountain do we light behold.

WE are often asked, "What attraction do you use to draw the people to the rooms?" In answer to this I would say, We do everything we can to draw the people to the place, and to make them feel at home within our walls; but our CHIEF means of accomplishing any good amongst them are the meetings which are held on Sunday and Thursday evenings. As I am often asked for descriptions of these meetings, I will give, as well as I can, a specimen for those interested in the subject.

In the first place, imagine a lofty room, capable of holding about nine hundred people. The room filled, and lined round the sides, with comfortable seats. At one end there is a large platform, on which a double semi-circle of seats is ranged for the choir, the people filling up the seats at the back, and the harmonium standing in the front.

The hour of the meeting is seven P.M., but at six P.M. the poor people begin to assemble; and at twenty minutes before seven the choir sing some of their hymns. The commencing hymn is given out, and the people rise to sing—

"Shout the tidings of salvation
To the aged and the young,
Till the precious invitation
Waken every heart and tongue.

(*Chorus*)—Shout the tidings of salvation
To the aged and the young,
Till each gath'ring crowd shall proclaim aloud,
The glorious work is done.

Shout the tidings of salvation
From the east unto the west,
Till each gath'ring congregation
With the gospel sound is blest.

Shout the tidings of salvation,
Mingling with the ocean's roar,
Till the ships of every nation
Bear the news from shore to shore.

Shout the tidings of salvation
O'er the islands of the sea,
Till in humble adoration
All to Christ shall bend the knee."

Prayer is then offered, and another hymn sung—

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee;
Let the water and the blood
From Thy riven side which flowed,
Be of sin the double cure,
Cleanse me from its guilt and power.

Not the labour of my hands
Can fulfil Thy law's demands ;
Could my zeal no respite know,
Could my tears for ever flow,
All for sin could not atone,
Thou must save, and Thou alone.

Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling ;
Naked come to Thee for dress,
Helpless, look to Thee for grace,
Vile I to the Fountain fly,
Wash me, Saviour, or I die.

While I draw this fleeting breath,
When my eyes shall close in death ;
When I rise to worlds unknown,
See Thee on Thy judgment throne,
Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

It is delightful to hear nearly a thousand voices joining heartily in these hymns, so full of truth, and so rich in faith, hope, and praise.

Now the Bible is opened, and either a subject taken up, a few verses read, or a narrative explained; sometimes one text only being a sufficient table on which to spread the feast for these hungry souls. We will take the first of these for this chapter, and I will try and put it into the simplest words, as though I were now speaking to the people.

"Shall I talk to you to-night about the

'ONE THING'

of the Bible?

"FIVE TIMES it is mentioned; first by David in one of his Psalms. (Read Psalm xxvii. 4.)

"'ONE THING HAVE I DESIRED of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to behold the beauty of the Lord, and to inquire in His temple.'

"David said, 'One thing *have I desired.*' Some people desire a great many things. We all want a good many things, I think. Some good things we should like to have, and some—bad. We want things for our bodies, for our minds, and for our souls. What do *you* want to-night? Perhaps a father wants something for his children, or he wants more money, more comforts, more strength for his work, or——. Are *you* a father? Yes. And you want something that will not satisfy you, that cannot make you happy. Too many, alas! are seeking evil pleasures, wicked company, false indulgences. Where must such desires as these end? DESTRUCTION! Yes, we know it, because God says so. Such a house "inclineth unto death, and her paths unto the dead" (Prov. ii. 19). 'The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked: who can know it?' (Jer. xvii. 9). No wonder, then, that the heart of man by nature desireth evil things.

"I think there is one very good thing which we *all desire* naturally, and that is a HOME. It is a

beautiful thing to see a man working to get himself *a home*, and when he has got it, labouring industriously to keep it. What sight can be more lovely than a mother's holy influences in her *home?* Don't you pity the poor child that has *no* home? Oh, dear friends, it is a true and happy instinct that God has implanted in our hearts when He has made us desire A HOME for ourselves and for those we love! But there is one fact we must consider. This world is fast passing away, its walls are crumbling and tottering on every side. We can almost hear them shake, as 'wars and rumours of wars,' . . . 'nation rising against nation, and kingdom against kingdom, . . . earthquakes in divers places, famines and troubles,' remind us that the end is drawing very near. So what you and I want to-night is a *settled* home, an EVERLASTING HOME in fact; and this was David's desire. 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that will I seek after; that I may DWELL IN THE HOUSE OF THE LORD all the days of my life.' That house is not at all a *dull* place to dwell in, though perhaps some of you think it is, because you have never come in at the door; that is the reason, and some friend of yours *told* you it was 'a gloomy thing to be religious.' It was quite a mistake; he had never tried it.

expecting to have a house of your own by-and-bye. We are all just *lodging* in this world, and are pilgrims passing on to a 'better land.' Abraham understood this when he willingly 'sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' Those also who 'died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.' . . . 'Now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city' (Heb. xi. 9–16). If we want to live in heaven by-and-bye, we must have heaven in our heart here. We must know what it is to rest sweetly in the love of Jesus, to have a hiding-place in the

'Rock of Ages, cleft for us.'

'The conies are but a feeble folk, yet make they their houses in the rocks' (Prov. xxx. 26). Is the Lord's heart your home to-night? If He were sitting beside you on that seat, could you just lean your head upon His shoulder as John

did at that last supper, with a clear confidence of safety, and a sure trust in His great redemption and His abiding love. Like Peter, could you look up in His face at this moment, and say, 'Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee'? 'Oh! I wish I could,' I hear some of you say; 'and I only hope that *at last* it will be all right with me!' Then the enemy whispers, 'Never mind, don't think about it now. It is *sure* to come all right at last.' There are a good many people who treat this all-important matter in this way. I will shew you how they do it. They take the first and third clause of this verse and join them together, and leave out the second —in this way. 'One thing have I desired of the Lord, that I may dwell in the house of the Lord,' and they leave out the most important part — 'THAT WILL I SEEK AFTER.' 'Oh! I hope it will be all right when I die;' and so the question is left unsettled. Dear friend! why don't *you* 'SEEK AFTER' that blessing NOW? What is there to wait for? Jesus says, 'I am the WAY, the Truth, and the Life.' He says, 'I am the DOOR' into that lovely house. Will you come in? will you let this be *your* 'one thing,' and let all the world know it too? Let them KNOW which way you are going. Perhaps *if you walk* very straight and steady on the road

to your home, keeping just in the 'narrow path,' wearing a nice, kind, happy face, and speaking very loving, kind, true words always, others will begin to want to come with you, and you will find a number of companions, and perhaps all your family, and these dear little children whom God has given you, all waiting to greet you on the threshold of that heavenly mansion, where 'there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away' (Rev. xxi. 4).

"The next

'ONE THING'

is in Luke x. 38–42: 'Now it came to pass, as they went, that He entered into a certain village: and a certain woman, named Martha, received Him into her house.

"'And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus' feet, and heard His word.

"'But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to Him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me.

"'And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things;

"'But one thing is needful: and Mary hath

chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.'

"'ONE THING IS NEEDFUL,' Jesus said. 'NEEDFUL!'—think of that. Necessary it means. A great many things may be pleasant, a great many things may be useful; but '*one thing* is needful.' I should think the smallest child in this room would know that bread and butter is more 'needful' to it than a toy; and any young man who is making a home for himself will agree with me that it would be folly to spend his money on a grand piano, when there was not a crust of bread in the cupboard, or a table or chair in the house. The family starving, and the man saying, 'I like a good dance of an evening.' What madness! You say none but a lunatic would do such a thing. Yet you are doing it. Many of you are doing that very thing, both as regards your eternal and your temporal state. You are gathering together all you can get of pleasure and amusement at the cost of your precious soul, and at the cost of your present welfare. You are just passing away the time in foolishness, and your poor soul is starving. Not one crumb of the 'bread of life' has ever passed your lips, and you are DYING. Yes, the soul is DEAD. The respectable, hard-working man says, 'Work is needful.' Quite true. Labour *is a blessing*, and idleness a curse. But are you

going to live for your work only, and forget the heavenly rest? or are you going to feed always on the 'husks the swine do eat,' when all the time the Father's table is spread with food that can make you live for eternity? I was asked once to go and see a woman who was dying. She was the trusted servant of a wealthy family. When I went into the little room where she lay, surrounded by every comfort her mistress and her faithful fellow-servants could provide for her, she received me with her hands clasped together, and a look of agony on her face, as she said, 'I have lived for my work, and for the family, but I have forgotten my poor *soul!*' Her sins evidently hung heavy on her heart as she asked me again and again to read to her out of the little Bible I held in my hand. God, in his mercy, before it was too late, had shewed her the lifelong mistake she had made in being 'careful and troubled about many things,' and omitting to secure the 'one thing needful;' but it was some time before she could see the pardoning mercy as revealed for her through Christ Jesus, the crucified and risen One. She died some weeks after, holding up those poor, wasted hands, while the word 'JESUS' trembled on her lips. 'Seek *ye* FIRST the kingdom of God, and His righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you' (Matt. vi. 33).

The 'one thing needful' is not only offered as for the dying-bed, but is a gift from God to gladden and purify our *life!* Mary chose it when in health; and while her sister, who lived in the same house, was too busy to consider the matter, Mary delighted to 'sit at the feet of Jesus, and hear his word.' We see that her pleasure and her duty were the same. A happy thing it is for us when this is our case—when duty becomes pleasure, and pleasure duty! Let us look to this matter earnestly now, and ask ourselves, Do I love that which conscience tells me is not right, and which makes me miserable all the time I am doing it? or do I love the Father, and His holy Son Jesus, and His blessed Holy Spirit BEST, and like to do the will of God? If your will is different from God's will, and duty and pleasure don't run in parallel lines with you, I think there must be something wrong. Just think it over, and you will see it quite plain. As 'the end' of the evil ways 'are death,' it is better to consider this matter before it be too late, and as those who go in 'crooked paths' 'shall not know peace' (Isa. lix. 8), surely our wisdom to-night is to take our place, like Mary, at Jesus' feet, and 'hear His word;' and, like Solomon, pray, 'Draw me, we will run after Thee;' and, like Caleb and Joshua, '*wholly* follow the Lord.' Then we shall have

true peace, blessing will rest upon our homes, and success will follow all our work. These gifts are promised to the humble, believing one, who ventures all upon the promise, trusting Him who 'knoweth how to give good gifts to them that ask Him.'

"'ONE THING THOU LACKEST: . . . come, take up the cross, and follow me' (Mark x. 21).

"A sad text. The young man was very rich; he had every luxury in his house, and plenty of money to buy more if he wanted. No doubt his servants would say of him, 'He has *everything;*' but no! it all counted for *nothing* in God's sight. Why? Because, with all his riches, he 'lacked one thing.' He had not found the 'pearl of great price,' and, worse still, he was satisfied with this state. He did not want it altered. That is, if you can call 'sad' and 'grieved' being satisfied. He was very rich, but VERY poor. Like too many a worldly heart, he could not bear to relinquish one coin of his gains, and yet his poor heart was in misery. And rather than part with something he possessed, he turned and 'went away,' and *left* Jesus, the glorious, loving Saviour, to pursue his own wishes; and as he went away, the iron fetters of Satan were binding him from head to foot, and dragging him cruelly down to perdition. His riches were woven into chains

of destruction, that by his own choice must needs drag him down into an endless darkness. He had forsaken the 'Light of life,' and as he turned his back on that gracious face, he cast about his path a shadow that must ever deepen, until the great gulf fixed its final separation between that poor soul and the God who would have saved him. Don't you pity that man? His heart ached while he pursued his miserable course, and can you wonder! With him he carried the memory of an aggrieved Friend, and a conscience whose voice he fain would stifle. There are partings amongst us brightened by anticipations of return, speedy or late, as the case may be; but here, what a gloomy prospect lay in view. THIS parting was disastrous in its results indeed. Wherever that poor rich man wandered, he must for long have been haunted by the sad words uttered, with one last invitation by Jesus, the 'Prince of Life,' the 'Prince of Peace'—'One thing thou lackest: . . . come, take up the cross, and follow me.'

"When I am visiting the people, I often hear expressions such as these: 'Ah yes! the poor man has his lot down here, but it will all be made up by-and-bye;' or, 'Yes! the rich have their comforts now, but the poor will have their time hereafter;' or, 'He is the only One we have got *to trust to*.' Now I want to say that all these

expressions are perfectly meaningless. There is no sense in them at all. They convey to my mind this idea—I think you mean by all this that there will be a sort of compensation hereafter between rich and poor, a sort of barter and exchange, and that all poor people will be happy in heaven, and all rich people must suffer. I don't know whether that is your meaning, but if so, it is a very great mistake. How can a poor man go to heaven if he is wicked, and never has his sins forgiven, or has no Saviour? and how can a rich man be kept out of heaven, if he has put his trust in Jesus, the unchanging Friend, who has made atonement for all his sins, and is blessing him every day? In the first place, how very much of the poverty and all the wretchedness of this town, for instance, comes not from circumstances, but from sin. The wretched miserable homes are the drunkards' homes; and the truly wretched creature is the drunkard himself. We all know that this is true. The sin makes the sorrow down here, and the misery hereafter too. The honest, hard-working, industrious, God-fearing man has nothing to complain of. He is quite happy. His wife and his little children, and his comfortable rooms, and his friends, all testify to his true success and real happiness; and this happiness is only the first

Listen to what David the king says, 'To BEHOLD THE BEAUTY OF THE LORD, and to inquire in His temple.' That sounds very happy work, doesn't it? And so you would find it if you would try. 'O taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the man that trusteth in Him' (Psa. xxxiv. 8). One very wonderful thing about this new beautiful Home is, that it satisfies the heart down here. It gives us a feeling of rest to know that we belong to the 'many mansions' which are being 'prepared' for us by Jesus our Saviour, who has gone before. If we have secured a place *there*, we feel at peace *here;* and no wonder. I was coming down from London in the train yesterday, and felt tired and very cold, and all the people in the carriage with me seemed very much the same as myself, and they made some complaints, and objected to the waiting at one of the junctions; but I thought to myself, 'It really does not matter much. I shall soon be at home. This is only a journey. In a little while I shall be sitting by the fireside in a comfortable room with my friends beside me.' If you and I, dear friends, *have* A HOME above, we need not fret over the troubles of this life. They soon will be done. What son would mind a little bit of dusty road if the father's house was just in sight? Perhaps *some of* you are staying in lodgings just now, and

expecting to have a house of your own by-and-bye. We are all just *lodging* in this world, and are pilgrims passing on to a 'better land.' Abraham understood this when he willingly 'sojourned in the land of promise, as in a strange country, dwelling in tabernacles with Isaac and Jacob, the heirs with him of the same promise: for he looked for a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' Those also who 'died in faith, not having received the promises, but having seen them afar off, and were persuaded of them, and embraced them, and confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth. For they that say such things declare plainly that they seek a country.' . . . 'Now they desire a better country, that is, an heavenly: wherefore God is not ashamed to be called their God; for He hath prepared for them a city' (Heb. xi. 9–16). If we want to live in heaven by-and-bye, we must have heaven in our heart here. We must know what it is to rest sweetly in the love of Jesus, to have a hiding-place in the

'Rock of Ages, cleft for us.'

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ourselves,' the seeing man proves the truth of His Saviour's words when He said, 'If any man walk in the day, he stumbleth not, because he seeth the light of this world. But if a man walk in the night, he stumbleth, because there is no light in him' (John xi. 9, 10). 'I am the Light of the world: he that followeth me shall not walk in darkness, but shall have the light of life' (John viii. 12). 'I am come a Light into the world, that whosoever believeth on Me should not abide in darkness' (John xii. 46).

"I once visited a man who has become both blind and deaf. This doubly sad visitation has come upon him in the prime of life. But with the outer sorrow he has found an inner joy. From having been a reckless, profane, and drinking man, proud in his rebellion against God, he has been brought down, I trust, into the very depths of a lowly repentance. From *these* depths the Lord can raise him to the very height of glory! The gates of heaven stand open before him. He said to me one day, 'You know I had begun attending the meetings, and liked them very much, though I could neither see or hear anything but the tune of the hymns. Strange to say, I could *feel* everything that was going on. I felt myself just carried up before God on the *prayers* of the people. I felt they were praying

for me. I cannot describe what the influence was; but my enjoyment was so great, that I went again and again. One evening, however, as I was on my way down the street, a rough hand suddenly seized my arm, and a man asked me, "Where are you going?" "To the meeting," I said. "I thought so," answered the man; "but you'll not go in there to-night; you shall go into this public-house and get some drink." "No! I am going to the meeting," I said, trying all the time to get away from him. "Now, what do you go there for?" he shouted; "you know you can't hear nothing, and you can't see nothing! What in the world do you go for?—I know what it is; you go *for what you can get.* That's it!" I just felt as if I had a dreadful blow—as if he had knocked me right down. I turned straight round, and groped my way home again. Weeks passed, and I seemed to have no comfort; my little bit of sunshine that was beginning to come into my life was all gone, and my poor heart grew very cold, and I began to grow discontented and miserable again. Well, do you know, last Saturday I was going along as best I could down the street, when "old John," as they call him—*poor* old John, I mean; they call him *poor* old John!—it is a mistake. I call him RICH old John! Why, he is as happy as a king. Well, I stopped to talk

to him,* and he began, "How are you getting on, Ned; going to the meetings still?" and I told him just the truth. I says, "No, John; I've given up going now." "Why! how's that?" says John; and then I told him all about what I have just told you, Miss, and how the other fellow said, "You go for what you can get." And old John, what do you think *he* said to that? He just said, "Did *that* knock you down, Ned? You might have given him an answer out quite bold at once." "What answer could I have given him, John?" "Why, you should have said, 'You *are right*, Sir! I do go for what I can get, and that is THE SALVATION OF MY SOUL. That is what I go for!' and then you would have shut him up altogether, and you might by those words have put a thought into his heart about his *own* soul. It is a pity you did not answer him like that, Ned." "So it is," I said; "you are right. I made a mistake that time; but God helping me, I shall not do such a thing again. I shall go to the meeting to-morrow evening." And I came, Miss, and I thank God, He spoke to me again like He did before. Now I am alone all day here—my wife is out at work—but I do not feel alone. There is

* This is an old blind man who makes his living by selling fruit at the corner of the street, one of the brightest Christians *I ever knew.*

One with me here. "It is good for me that I have been afflicted, for before I was afflicted I went astray." And those tunes, Miss, that they sing at the meetings, they are always in my head. I can't get them out. I keep whistling and humming other tunes, but that hymn *won't* go. It always comes back to me.' 'Don't drive it away,' I said to him, 'it is like an angel whispering to you, reminding you of Him who died that you might live, and is very gently calling you to Himself.' 'Oh! is that it, Miss?' he brightly replied; 'I shan't forget that. Thank you.' Mr Moody used to tell us of a blind man who carried a lantern that other people might not stumble over him. So you and I, if we can say, 'Whereas I was blind, now I see,' must be very careful to be humble, true, consistent Christians, that no one else may stumble over us; but that we may be the means in our Father's hand of drawing many another soul into these fields of light.

"The last 'one thing' is in Philippians iii. 13—

'ONE THING I DO,

forgetting those things which are behind, and reaching forth unto those things which are before, I press toward the mark, for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.'

"Here is the best kind of 'doing.' Having planted our foot on the narrow way, let us 'press forward,' 'running with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith' (Heb. xii. 1, 2). When a man is running a race, he is not sitting, or standing, or loitering. He is hard at work. Every muscle is in play; all his energies are called out. It is a struggle, an exertion; but then he has a prize in view: and *what* a prize in this case — a heavenly prize! Isn't it worth running for? Now, let us think just for a moment about this grand idea, 'I am doing the best I can.' I have heard the worst of wives and mothers, and the most cruel fathers, say these words continually. What does it mean? It means the *worst* they can! Instead of leading a holy life, according to God's commands, the men and women who say this are very often the most hardened sinners. But another class of persons make use of the same expression. These are the respectable people who think that by going to church once every Sunday, or perhaps oftener than that, or by going to chapel, or by coming to this meeting, they are going to heaven. What a delusion! 'Doing the best I can,' they say. Do *you* say this? Now, dear friends, may *God grant* that you truly believe what I am going

to say to you now. You are *not* 'doing the best you can;' but suppose you *were* doing it, your very righteousness is as 'filthy rags' in God's sight. Just think of that. It all counts for nothing; all wasted effort. You never can get salvation by such lukewarm assertions as these. What then are you to do? Accept salvation as A GIFT; and 'do the best you can' in *right good earnest*, because you *have* GOT IT! 'Do the best you can,' not in order to save yourself, but because you ARE *saved*. This is God's own appointed way, and how can we ever devise a better? Before I finish, shall I tell you about a little boy I heard of the other day? He went with his father and a party of friends to a picnic on the sea-shore. It was a very lonely place, a wild rocky coast. When they had all had their dinner together, the father said, 'I am going out in the boat. Who will come with me?' All agreed to go except the little boy and his sister, who said they would rather stay and play by themselves. As the afternoon wore on, and the father did not return, the little boy looked many times out to sea; at last he said to his sister, 'There's the fog settling down over the bay. I am afraid father cannot find his way back.' It was quite true. The little boy was right. The boating party was getting bewildered in their

homeward course by that cold damp fog, which, like a treacherous mantle, seemed gradually to be enveloping them in its folds. The poor father struggled with his oars, steered the boat this way and that way, and then he gave utterance to the fearful thoughts that had at last taken possession of his mind in this terrible darkness. 'Friends,' he said, 'we have lost our way; I cannot find the shore!' Just at that moment he heard the clear ringing voice of his little boy in the distance, over the waters and through the fog. 'Steer straight for me, father; steer straight for me!' Though the father could not see the way, he could hear the little voice he loved, and diligently he plied his oars in the direction of the sound. Presently his courage began again to falter. His hands grew weary and his heart heavy. 'We have lost our way,' he said once more; 'we shall be benighted in this fog.' Again rang out the little voice, and this time nearer than before, 'Steer straight for me, father; steer straight for me!' Again hope awoke in the weary man's heart, and he redoubled his efforts, steering true to the sweet, clear voice he knew so well. A third time his hands began to falter, and he knew not the path over those dull, dark waters. Hope was giving way, and despair creeping over the spirit of each traveller in that little boat, when

close at hand rang the little voice once more, 'Father, father,' cried the boy, 'I hear the oars; you are near the land. Steer straight for me, father; steer straight for me!' Another struggle with the tide, another pull with the oars, and the boat was touching that rocky shore. The boy was locked in his father's arms. 'My child,' said the strong man, 'you have saved your father's life to-night! God bless you, my boy!' In one fortnight from that time the bright boy and his sister were resting on a happier Shore. A short illness carried them both away from the loving father's arms, and into the Haven of Peace. They were in 'the desired Haven, where they would be,' and the father, while he wept in his solitary home, would say amidst his tears, 'I think I can still hear my precious child, my boy, calling, "Steer straight for me, father, steer straight for me;" and I WILL "steer straight" for that heavenly home. Beloved friends, JESUS has gone before to prepare for you that unchanging home of an endless light! That golden shore is within your reach, will you hearken to His call? Perhaps He has taken from your heart some treasure, some loved one; He has carried the little lamb away from these waves of earthly need and sinful trouble, and has housed him in a mansion of glory; and to YOU, dear father or mother, the little voice calls to-night,

'Steer straight for me, father; steer straig
me!'

"Let us pray.

"Prayer offered, and then the hymn sung

'Light in the darkness, sailor, day is at hand!
See o'er the foaming billows fair haven's land,
Drear was the voyage, sailor, now almost o'er,
Safe within the life-boat, sailor, pull for the shore.

Chorus—Pull for the shore, sailor, pull for the shore,
Heed not the rolling waves, but bend to the oar,
Safe in the life-boat, sailor, cling to self no more,
Leave the poor old stranded wreck, and pull for the

'Trust in the life-boat, sailor, all else will fail!
Stronger the surges dash, and fiercer the gale,
Heed not the stormy winds, though loudly they roa
Watch the bright and morning star, and pull for the

'Bright gleams the morning, sailor, uplift the eye,
Clouds and darkness disappearing, glory is nigh;
Safe in the life-boat, sailor, sing evermore,
Glory, glory, Hallelujah! Pull for the shore.'"

And the people disperse to their homes.

We used to be so stopped by the people c
way out of the hall afterwards, in their eag
to know the personal application of what had
said on the various points treated of, that al
year ago I invited them to remain behind, i
wished to do so, for an inquiry or prayer-me
So many availed themselves of this permi
that the plan has been continued ever since
has been found very useful in many instance

"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you." How often has this promise been pleaded and answered amongst these poor people!

CHAPTER X.

Our Week Evenings.

I ask to love Thee through the stir and strife—
To love more deeply, truly, than before,
Not sleeping, but in conscious, perfect life.
I ask not for a love that finds me bold
Amidst the fair and bright things given by Thee;
But planted here to blossom and unfold,
Amidst the true Love in Eternity.

TO the upper classes there have been opened by money, education, and travel, many vast fields of pleasure, as well as occupation, from which the poor are entirely debarred. The cottage mother, busy all day with her household avocations and her many anxieties, has but little sunshine in her life. The working man, labouring hard to provide the food and clothes for his family, must toil from six o'clock in the morning to six o'clock at night with an energy which would put many a better instructed one to shame, if the two lives were placed in a strict comparison. After the toil, however, relaxation is needed, and then comes the strong temptation. Hitherto the enemy has held as his stronghold the corner of almost every street. There the gin-palace, with its flaring lights and its poisonous dainties, backed up by the soft words of the publican, and the airs and

graces of his wife and bar-maids, does its deadly work. These poor men, and women too, are lured within its destructive walls, until the drink they can purchase so freely there has taken away their strength, their health, their clothes, food, homes—their very SOULS! And the country cries, "Shame upon the drunkard!" Whose fault is it? Is it not OUR fault? Why should we LET the streets become the property for the vilest purposes of those who would enrich themselves by the DESTRUCTION of the nation! Instead of hiding away in some dark and sin-polluted slum this horrible curse of intoxication, our very metropolis seems to *boast the honour!* Mingled with shops, and houses, and gardens, and warerooms, stands the public-house by some soft name, such as "The Dove," or "The White Lamb," or "The Happy Polly," or a name of honour, "The Prince of Wales," "The Duke," "The Monarch," or of energy and bravery, "The White Horse," "The Red Lion," "The Cricketers," endeavouring to draw attention to its iniquitous trade under deceitful guise. If, my reader, you do not believe this, I would entreat you quietly to investigate the matter. Inquire into the condition of things, and examine for yourself into the state of any one of these public-houses, or to go further, *I would* say, into *many* of these places, and

if your very soul does not recoil from the evil horrors to which I can but *allude* here, I can only say you have not the heart of an Englishman, or an Englishwoman. But we have a right to expect a better result from such inspection as I have suggested. The very mob, who are themselves the complete victims of this foe, revolt in horror from its crushing powers; but meeting no friendly or helping hand stretched forth to aid them in an escape from their misery, just sink back in physical as well as mental and spiritual prostration, yielding hopelessly to the deadly draught. An effort should surely be made, and that on a vast scale, through the length and breadth of England, Scotland, and Ireland, and our Colonies, both to remove the facilities for this evil trade, and also to supply for the populace the counter-attraction of brightly lighted houses, wholesome refreshments, and opportunities of hearing and reading that which will truly benefit, both spiritually and temporally. We hear of want of gratitude! My own experience has been the very reverse. I am astonished every day at the extraordinary appreciation of the people for new and better pleasures when once they have tasted them. To this assertion many no doubt will answer, "It is evident that the success of such movements as these must depend entirely on

the mode in which they are carried out." This is perfectly true; and *therefore* we come for WISDOM to Him who has said, "If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men *liberally*, and upbraideth not, and it SHALL be given him" (James i. 5). Then, going forth in that wisdom, "speaking the truth in love," we *must* succeed in training the people. Self-forgetting, self-denying, cheerful, willing obedience to the Master's call, and the first and chief difficulty is gone. For truly SELF, in some shape or form, is the hindrance to this work. Let us turn our eye as philanthropists *from* the gigantic nature of the evil, *and* the inefficiency of poor self, *unto* the Almighty power of Jehovah, and the pledged word He has given.

The system we have pursued here has been found to answer well, and may therefore be worth a short account in detail. Our large coffee-room has been so often described that I need perhaps hardly enter into particulars, further than by saying it is in length 40 ft., breadth 32 ft., furnished with tables and seats, arranged as sociably as possible, and the walls ornamented, I might say almost covered, with texts and pictures. A large counter at one end, spread with clean, tempting-*looking* food, shining pewter urns full of coffee, *tea, and* cocoa, always hot and ready for the

customer; bookshelves full of books, the contents of the one being for loan, and the other for sale; a cupboard full of tracts, periodicals, and picture-papers, complete the homely comfort of the rooms. We wish the men to consider this place as a resort where they may spend many hours if they will, not merely a shop where food is to be bought. Therefore every table is supplied with literature of some description, the large print Testament always taking its rightful place as the very best entertainment we have to offer. "Them that honour Me I will honour," saith the Lord, and we *are* honoured by seeing marvellously the success of these arrangements.

In addition to this coffee-room, which is capable of seating about one hundred and fifty persons, we have another large room and a smaller one. We might employ several other rooms if we had them at our disposal.

On Sundays

the coffee-room is closed, but the meeting-rooms are opened four times in the day.

General Prayer-Meeting, . .	10 A.M.
Ordinary Meeting, . . .	3 P.M.
Boys' Class, ...	4 P.M.
Large Meeting, ...	7 P.M.
After Meeting, ...	8 P.M.

The art of teaching may be learnt in the following ways:—

1. By study of Scripture and prayer. The Gospels and Old Testament histories are true examples of the best and most interesting form of teaching.

2. By reading teachers' magazines and attending model classes, or listening to the teaching of any good schoolmaster or mistress.

3. By studying nature in its various forms or departments (?), and using from it illustrations for the truths imparted. Our Saviour did this in His simple teachings, pointing to the vine, and saying as He did so, "I am the True Vine;" then the corn, saying, "I am the Bread of Life;" the hen and chickens, "As the hen doth gather her chickens under her wings," &c.

4. By reading history, biography, and other books, which, as information, would help to bear out any point that is being put before the children.

5. Teaching may, I think, be divided into *four parts*—

PRECEPT.
PROMISE.
ILLUSTRATION.
EXAMPLE.

If these matters are carefully studied, with *prayer* for abundant blessing from "the Father

of lights, with whom is no variableness or shadow of turning," I think we may venture to say no willing teacher can fail of success. Of course all these efforts must be made in true, constant, and unwearying *cheerfulness* and *love*. The children must be much visited in their homes, and their friendship cultivated.

Let us remember the thanksgiving of the apostle Paul on behalf of the Corinthian Church: "I thank my God . . . . that in everything ye are enriched by Him . . . . so that ye come behind in no gifts; waiting for the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ" (1 Cor. i. 7).

The SUNDAY EVENING MEETING has already been described. In a further allusion to it I would say, many objectors have suggested that this meeting is by no means a necessary part of our coffee-room work, and might as well be dispensed with. In reply to this, I can only say, you might as well tell me a clock could work without its mainspring, or a wheel without its axle. Our coffee-room work would soon fall through without the Sunday evening meeting. The two are essential to each other, and the same may be said of all the meetings held in connection with the coffee-room. The two departments of influence necessarily act and react upon one another. Those who have never fully entered into the whole work-

ing of our system, may possibly find this hard to understand. But the voice of those who in this town have received benefit from attendance at the Rooms, would be unanimous in support of what I am saying.

On Monday Evening

a Bible Reading or Prayer-meeting is held by the men amongst themselves in one room. A Temperance meeting in another room, at the same time, or after the prayer-meeting. The Temperance Choir practice in a third room.

The Men's Bible Readings, or prayer-meetings, are conducted quite among themselves and in their own way, and are certainly most popular with them—so much so, that they contrive to hold them three or four times a-week. G——, the missionary, and the other men who attend, take the lead alternately in these meetings. Hymns are sung, prayers offered by several of those present, and a chapter in the Bible "read round." On this chapter comments are made, questions asked, and references found; and certainly more Scripture is learnt by them in this way than by any other means. I saw the men the other evening coming out from this little meeting with the most happy smiles, and parting good-nights to one another. So I said, "You

certainly all look very happy to-night. What chapter have you been reading? It must have been something very good." "Oh yes, it was," they answered. "It was the first chapter of the Epistle of James—all about the 'crown of life,' and 'enduring temptation.'" "And the wisdom and the good gifts from above," said another. "It's a very strengthening chapter," added a third. They need strengthening, these poor fellows, for their daily battle of life. Happy is it for them when they have found out the true and only secret—a strength that cannot be overcome by the enemy. "Blessed is the man whose strength IS IN THEE: in whose heart are the ways of them. Who passing through the valley of Baca make it a well; the rain also filleth the pools. They go from strength to strength; every one of them in Zion appeareth before God" (Psalm lxxxiv. 5–7).

The Temperance Meeting is either a committee meeting to discuss projects for the week's work, or a temperance lecture, or a tea for drunkards, such as I have described in an earlier chapter. Schemes for visiting, &c., are discussed on the committee nights, the latter generally following a social meeting for all the temperance members. As all denominations are now uniting in this, it promises to be a very useful organisation.

The Temperance Choir Practice is merely a practice of temperance songs, hand-bells, and recitations, in preparation for the various larger meetings that are held from time to time.

At a members' tea held lately I heard an old man speaking of his son, and on asking what was the news, he said, "I was talking of my son James. You know he went to Canada several years ago. He was a very thoughtless young fellow, and never would listen much to anything I said to him. He was very fond of the drink, too. When he went away, I said to him, 'James, don't touch the drink any more;' and he answered me, 'Father, as long as it is to be had anywhere, I will get it.' But I said, 'Oh! my boy, I trust in PRAYER. I will *pray* for you.' Then, when he had started for Liverpool, I prayed that he might be helped on his journey—and sure enough the prayer was answered, and on the wharf a gentleman engaged him to be his servant all the way —680 miles!—and he paid all his expenses. A little while after that he wrote to tell me he had become a teetotaller; that was six years ago. To-day I have just had a letter from him, saying he has just bought a farm of a hundred acres, with a house on it, at four dollars an acre. It's all through water-drinking," said the old man emphatically, "and it is all an answer to prayer."

TUESDAY EVENING,

the regular Choir practice for our meetings in one room. Night school during winter in a second. Men's Bible reading in a third.

Our choir consists of both men and boys; the former being voluntary helpers, and the latter paid just the same as a church choir.

The night school consists of several classes taught by different friends, who kindly devote two evenings a-week to these poor men, who are truly thankful for the simple teaching given them in reading, writing, dictation, and arithmetic.

WEDNESDAY EVENING,

Men's Bible Class.

This class, which is carried on now all the year round, both summer and winter, and well attended, has been so fully described in *Our Coffee-Room*, that I need not say more about it here, further than that it is a very important part of our machinery. The missionary calls it the "testing stone;" and so it is. The subjects handled at these classes are made very interesting by the different lights thrown on them from passages quoted, difficulties expressed, and brought face to face with the wisdom of the Divine Word, and words of encouragement and sympathy spoken by

one another. The Bible Class tie of brotherhood is certainly very strong. It is interesting also to see the outsiders welcomed in, given the best places, and treated as hospitably as possible, that they may feel *at home* amongst the other members.

Thursday Evening,

at 8 P.M., a general meeting is held in the large room adjoining the coffee-room, and is largely attended every week. It was always conducted precisely the same as the Sunday evening gatherings. Lately, however, we have varied it by readings from the *Pilgrim's Progress*. These are exceedingly popular, the earnest attention of the people's faces as they listen to its pages and a word of explanation or remark here and there, being quite a study. Last Thursday I was reading to them the conversation between Faithful and Christian. We had proceeded quietly enough, the meeting being only varied by some smiles and nods from my audience now and then, when I suddenly came upon Faithful's remark with regard to the "Old Man" who desired him to come into his house and stay with him, recommending the charms of his "three unmarried daughters—Lust of the Eyes, Lust of the Flesh, and Pride of Life," and permitting him to "marry them *all*" if he *liked*. A perfect burst of laughter at this point

upset my gravity, and I could not resist the inclination to say, "That *was* a chance for him, wasn't it?" This redoubled their amusement, and I feel quite sure this homely method of alluding to evils one desired them to be warned against was as wholesome as a scolding or a graver lecture. After the meeting, as I was going out of the room, a man, who used to be a most wicked little carter, now "a saint indeed," "in whom" there appears to be "no guile," said to me in his usual solemn, reverent manner, with just the suspicion of a smile lurking about the corners of his mouth, "I am afraid there's a good many of us married to them three girls." This was said exceedingly slowly, and with such effect that I wished it had been uttered from the platform for the benefit of the others. Many a time I have heard the people say, "I am so sorry when you stop reading always. I should like you to go on all night!" "I do *enjoy* it so," said one, the other evening. Both men and women attend these meetings, and come in good numbers, filling first the meeting (from two to three hundred in number), and then filling the coffee-room afterwards, where the choir sing hymns, and the people join in or not as they please. Liberty Hall ought to be the name of that coffee-room. The people are perfectly at home, sitting and

standing, so as to cover every available foot of space, some reading, some talking, some singing. Here we get an opportunity of talking with them, and learning to know them better than we could by any other means. "I call this a good music hall, and wish there were more of them," said a gentleman who came in the other evening. Large sale is done at the counter on Thursday evenings, and smoking coffee, with other viands, is partaken of by the different groups surrounding the tables.

FRIDAY EVENING,

Men's Night School. Bible reading and prayer-meeting—private.

SATURDAY EVENING,

Choir practice in one room. Bible reading—private—in another.

In the coffee-room the men are playing their games, reading the newspapers, chatting with each other, looking at the graphioscope, stereoscope, and listening to the musical boxes. At nine P.M. the choir come in, and sing for three-quarters of an hour. During the course of the evening a few verses are read from the Bible in the room. I often see the men who have become changed through these influences endeavouring

to promote the same good amongst their fellow-workmen whom they have decoyed in for that purpose.

On one of these Saturday evenings I noticed J——, the coffee-stall man, in close converse with two very drinking looking men, who were sitting in front of the cups of coffee, to which I believe he had just treated them.

"What are you talking about?" I asked.

"Telling them they had better come in *here* of a-night," said J——.

"Yes," chimed in one of the others, "I've been a bad sort of a chap, Miss C——, and I want you to make me a good man. *There!* a bad lot *we* are—yes! and no mistake." Then, bridling himself up, he said, "Not so *very* bad, neither. No wife-beating, nor that; only *just like* J—— used to be—there you have it—squandering away the money, and the like; and going into the public-house."

To all these several points the other man nodded assent, saying, "Yes, that's it."

Then the first speaker continued, "Is there any chance for me, do you think?"

Upon which the second took up the cudgels most vehemently, saying, "*Of course* there is a chance for us! Who says there isn't? It is a long lane that has no turning."

changed

CHAPTER XI.

Questions Answered.

He alone can master this world, who has won the heavenly crown ;
He alone reads time's dark riddle, who in life eternal stands.

THE interest of the country is now so generally awakened in the question of providing suitable retreats for the working men during their hours of leisure, that numbers of ladies as well as gentlemen are endeavouring to start coffee-rooms and coffee-houses in their various neighbourhoods. The great obstacle in many of these cases is the inexperience on this particular subject, of those who are anxious thus to benefit the towns and villages of their neighbourhood. This of course necessitates a great deal of correspondence, and many questions are asked, some of which I should like to answer here for the benefit of those also who feel certain difficulties which at first sight may appear insuperable.

I. The question is still asked me almost daily, "Is your coffee-room self-supporting?" In reply to this I would say, On this point our coffee-

room is not a fair specimen of a self-supporting work.

1. It is held in large and expensive rooms, because we have no other building at our service.

2. Having only two public rooms and one small passage room to offer to the people, we cannot have a paid reading-room, nor can we have lodging-rooms, all of which would of course help to defray our expenses.

3. Our town is but a small one, and though sufficient in population to make large rooms fully needful for the masses of working people who surround us, and who attend in great numbers, still the traffic is neither that of a city or a factory town, where a constant moving thoroughfare might enrich the coffers of such a place in these more advantageous circumstances.

These are the circumstances of our case. But with all these disadvantages, our receipts gradually increase, THE PROFITS ON EACH ARTICLE SOLD BEING VERY GOOD. As many of our visitors seem much surprised when told that our work is, as far as possible, on a commercial basis, I must, for the good of other coffee-rooms, beg to notice specially this fact here—NOTHING IS SOLD ON OUR COUNTER WITHOUT PROFIT; ONE OF OUR RULES BEING, TO SELL NOTHING AT A LOSS. For further answer *to this* question, will my reader kindly refer to

Our Coffee-Room, pp. 243–245. Lodging-rooms, baths, &c., will greatly help, of course, the yearly payments. The large front room, capable of holding a number of people, filled with tables and seats, and at one end of which the refreshments are served, ought NEVER TO HAVE AN ADMISSION FEE, as by this means you banish the very persons you wish to reach. THE SALE OF FOOD fully pays the expenses of this department of the work. It is the mission entourage that costs the money, and needs external help.

II. "Do you think coffee-rooms *without* mission work are quite useless?"

No; coffee-rooms ought to be established in every street, in order to compete with the fearful trade which is now almost monopolised by the gin-palaces. "We have nowhere else to go," say the poor; and the fact is too evident. The fact however is also evident, that if proper places of refreshment, without any intoxicating liquors, are also provided, the people are thankful for them, and even now shew their appreciation of the effort made for them. In a few years' time, when the movement has more widely spread, we may hope to see the tastes of the populace decidedly improved, some of the terrible havoc of the past having been repaired by the introduc-

tion of better refreshments and purer resorts, than the dens of evil where beer and spirits are sold.

At the same time, in every town and village, besides these shops, a PLACE OF RESORT is required for the working-men. In these records I have endeavoured by illustrative cases to shew that to make such resorts truly beneficial, a higher than any human agency is needed. A divine remedy, and that contained in the living Word of God, is all-essential for the cure of all diseases, mental and spiritual, and in how many cases even *physical!* as in the case of the drunkard reclaimed. Nor can I see why large print Bibles and Testaments should not be freely placed on the tables of every coffee-*shop* as well as *saloon*. Is not England a Christian country? and is not the Bible her acknowledged standard? Why then should it be banished from under any roof in the United Kingdom? surely much less in rooms started by philanthropic individuals or Christian companies. The men of all classes *delight* in taking up a book to read, and especially a Testament, while they are drinking their coffee or eating their dinner; and seeing how little time they have for self-improvement, why should they not be indulged? Where *one* might pass a contemptuous remark, a hundred would be attracted.

III. "But you are only speaking of your own town, where no doubt the people are very different from what they are in *our* locality. In London (for instance) surely this plan would not be possible."

On one occasion we received notice that a party of men were coming down for a dinner, thus celebrating the annual holiday given by the firm to which they belong. They arrived at the appointed time, having spent their morning on the adjoining hills. They were to take their dinner, then continue their rambles, and return to London by an evening train. I came down to see them at the rooms. When they had finished their repast, I handed round some picture papers and little books, and said, "I hope you may have God's blessing on yourselves and on all the firm." They looked rather surprised, though some said, "Thank you;" and so I continued, "The Lord has given these rooms, and the excursion, and health and strength, with every mercy. It is pleasant to think of the King, isn't it?" There was no answer, but a general look of amazement. "Then, before you go, may I ask the Lord's blessing on every one of you, and on your homes?" So saying, just as I stood there, I asked the Lord's blessing for them, through time and eternity, in a very few words. As I finished,

there was a most reverent silence, and then I heard one man say in an undertone to another, "That is all very well; but *this* is hardly the time for it." I managed to get round to his end of the table, and without noticing that I had heard his remark, said, "Don't you think it is a very good thing to praise the KING and seek His favour? It seems right to me. What do *you* think?" "Well, Miss," said the man, looking rather embarrassed, "It is all very well for the RICH to think on such subjects, if they wish to do so, when they sit comfortable by their own firesides; but as for men like us, that has to get a living, there is no use for *us* to take up such things."

"Why not?" I asked.

"You see there are such lots of temptations for us." (All the other men were listening most attentively, as he proceeded.) We can't be religious, and we had better let it alone."

"Have the rich any temptations?" I said.

"I don't know whether they have any temptations," he replied; "they have plenty of SINS."

"Oh! then you have answered my question," I said. "Of course if they have sins, they must have temptations. Yes! and yield to them *too*." He gave his head a sagacious shake to

one side, in reply. "The poor men, you say, have temptations. Do *they* yield to the temptation too?"

"Of course they do," he said; "how can they help it?"

"Well, now," I said, "you have just put me where I wanted. You have made it all quite straight. You say the RICH have sins and temptations, and yield to them; and you say the POOR have sins and temptations, and yield to them. Now, you have put us all on the same platform, waiting for the same train; and THAT IS WHERE WE ARE! On the same level—poor, lost sinners, needing a common SAVIOUR! The train of Death is on one side, the train of Life on the other. We all have the offer—which shall we enter to-day?"

"She's right," said several voices. "That's the way to look at it." And the eager expression of their intelligent faces I shall never forget.

So quoting one or two passages on a FREE SALVATION, I said, "You remind me of our policemen. They all have breakfast here once a-month in this little room, and when they have done, we sing some hymns. Would you like a hymn before you go?"

"Oh yes! oh yes!" was the response; and in a few moments the musical instrument was

by my side, and G—— was suggesting, "Shall we sing

'YIELD NOT TO TEMPTATION'?

"God is faithful, who will not suffer you to be tempted above that ye are able."—1 COR. X. 13.

'Yield not to temptation, for yielding is sin,
Each victory will help you some other to win;
Fight manfully onward, dark passions subdue,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

Chorus—Ask the Saviour to help you, comfort, strengthen, and keep you;
He is willing to aid you, He will carry you through.

'Shun evil companions, bad language disdain,
God's name hold in reverence, nor take it in vain;
Be thoughtful and earnest, kindhearted and true,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.

'To him that o'ercometh God giveth a crown,
Through faith we shall conquer, though often cast down;
He who is our Saviour our strength will renew,
Look ever to Jesus, He'll carry you through.'"

By their own request one or two more hymns were sung, and we parted, having first exchanged such shakings of hands! As the others went out, the man with whom I had held the conversation related, and who appeared to be rather a leader among the rest, came back into the room to me, closed the door behind him, and said, "You know, Miss, I only meant, that though religion is well enough in its way for such as you, I didn't think it was hardly suitable for such an occasion as this."

I said, "Dear friend, are you a Christian?"

He stepped back as if he had received a shock, and then gathering himself up again, he said, "No, Ma'am, I am not. There is no use in telling an untruth about it. I am very far from a Christian. I begin to think I believe in nothing at all. I doubt even the existence of a God; and such views as these is spreading very much amongst our class."

"I want you to be *saved*," I said. "Oh! I want you to be SAVED! Why not? When the Lord Jesus is waiting to bless you, and to *forgive* you all the past?"

We had a deeply interesting conversation. The young man quite broke down, and we parted the warmest of friends, he accepting a small Bible with maps from me before he left.

Our habit in these rooms of sowing the seed beside all waters is so constant, that people come and go by hundreds, and pass entirely from our minds, except when recalled by some gracious encouraging token from the hand of blessing.

This little episode, however, was not to pass unnoticed. A week or two afterwards, the builder at the head of the firm wrote to me saying that his men had all requested him to express to me "their grateful thanks for the interest" I had taken in them on their visit to D——; that they had enjoyed a very pleasant day in the country;

God's own word enlightens us, ever taking fresh trust and courage from the command and promise, "Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters, sending forth thither the feet of the ox and of the ass." Laborious zeal, patient humility.

VI. "What musical instruments do you use?"

Various harmoniums, and a small instrument for hand-playing only, size about two and a-half feet by one and a-half, five inches deep, placed on the knee, played with one hand, while the other blows; price three guineas. It can be obtained from Mettzler & Co., 35 Great Marlborough Street, W. London, and is called a "Book Harmonium." This instrument, which has a remarkably sweet tone, is most suitable for leading the singing in hospitals, cottage meetings, classes, &c. The people call it "The Music Book," because it is shaped like a large book, the cover when opened displaying notes within like a small piano. "It *is* a treat," the poor sick ones say, when we have sung some hymns together in the largest ward of our little hospital. How often, too, is the Lord glorified when He thus sees *hearts* "making melody" unto Him! Often a note of praise will do more to banish the gloomy clouds of solitude, pain, or depression, than any other means that could be used.

VII. "Do you believe that lasting good is

accomplished by such a work as this, in its various departments?"

I thank God that I can testify that every case specially mentioned in *Our Coffee-Room* of men and homes reclaimed has, by our Father's GREAT goodness and wonderful love and all-sufficient grace, been kept firm, STEDFAST. When Christians looking on at conversions, ask, "Will they last?" it seems to me that the practical view of the case as the Lord puts it to *ourselves*, is simply this—Will YOU obey the Master's voice, and "feed these lambs"? Will you nourish, teach, train, encourage, and LOVE these new-born souls? or will you turn away from them to a life of ease and pleasure, or treat them with a cold neglect, because you "have other duties to perform." If the people of the Lord act thus towards the "little ones" of the flock, what must be the result? What would be the result in a nursery, if such were the case? Must not the child be fed and taught and loved? Why are whole parishes mourning at this very moment over "stagnation," "coldness," want of interest amongst the people? Is it not because they who *have* received "the Life" are not receiving it "more abundantly," and in receiving, are not daily imparting, and then having imparted, are not "cherishing" and "nourishing" the young and

tender life? The reflex duty of the church of God, I am sure, needs much to be impressed on our hearts at the present time, when every agency for evil, *and for counterfeit good*, is stirring its utmost powers to ruin the unwary. The activity of evil ought to put us to shame. Oh! that we might unite in one national ENTREATY, "THY WILL BE DONE ON EARTH, AS IT IS IN HEAVEN"!

A beautiful little result of our operations in the wooden tent came before me a few days ago. It is now a year and three months since our quiet Common was invaded by the Scotch militia. Since then, beyond an interview with some of them at Perth last autumn, I have not heard much of the warm-hearted Scotchmen. But while sitting in the drawing-room last Wednesday, the servant came and said, "A man has called to see you, who says he was in the Scotch militia last year." I went to the door, and in a moment I recognised one of the Perth riflemen, but in a plain suit of grey tweed clothes, and a knotted stick in his hand. His accents told that he had come "fra over the border," but I knew him well, for he was one of the men who used to be amongst our warmest supporters on the Common here, and at Aldershot he used to help me to carry notices of meetings and tracts all down the lines of tents to the other men. To-day he was

all smiles, and his greeting was warm enough to be worthy of a Highlander. He soon told me he had come to England with a drove of cattle, and had travelled "ninety miles further" than his necessary destination to see us all here. He had already called on G——, at the coffee-room, who (he informed me with great delight evidently) had said, directly he entered the room, "There's one of the Scotchmen!" "Several knew me in the town," he continued. "I'll be in the room to-night, and see you *all*." We had a long talk, but he was more communicative to G——. When he was asked, "Do you think any real good was done amongst the militia in our wooden room," his answer was, "In my village *alone* there's *ten men quite changed* ever since that time. You would hardly know them to be the same fellows they were when they came first to D——." He then described to G—— how their old drinking habits and careless ways had been abandoned, their homes had become respectable, and they were "very earnest in trying to turn everybody else." "Then when any man asks them, 'How ever did you get this change?' they say, 'You just go and pay a visit to D—— for a fortnight, and attend the coffee-rooms, and then perhaps you will get the change too!' We have prayer-meetings twice a-week now in our place,

and they are well attended. The people are getting very altered." Our Scotchman's delight in the recognition of the large musical box was very great. "I mind it well," he said, when I set it playing last evening, and sprang from his seat to inspect the little gilt birds that play the tune. Then he was enchanted with the photographic views of the camp and other pictures exhibited in the graphioscope, on one of the tables. I saw "Dummy" (our deaf and dumb friend) trying in vain to make him understand some unspoken question last night as he sat over his newspaper and cup of coffee, so I went to the rescue. On his fingers, Dummy immediately asked me to interpret to him the question, "How long are you going to stay here?" "Till Tuesday," replied the other. Dummy made a gesture of sorrow that he was going. "But tell him I'll be back again in three weeks," said the Scotchman. Dummy with his face all beaming in smiles, gave him a hearty clap on the back, and then continued his interrogations, by spelling on his fingers the word "trade?" "Cattle dealer," replied the Scotchman, and the conversation was finished by Dummy making signs to signify that we were all working at different occupations down here, but that we should all meet in Heaven by-and-by.

VIII. "But it is a pity there should be so much excitement."

Is there excitement? I am in the rooms almost every evening, but have never seen any trace of it. The people seem quite quiet. On the Sunday evenings you might hear a pin drop, the room is so still. The people look solemn and quiet, and very attentive. If there *were* excitement, I should hardly wonder, considering the rough elements we have assembled there, all so eager to get places; but there is not a sign of it. A kind friend of mine, who was obliged to hear this movement thus spoken of the other day, replied to the objector—WHO HAD NEVER BEEN IN THE ROOMS, by his own confession—"If you were walking on one of the quays in London, and saw a drunkard tottering on the edge of the parapet, would you not wonder if the passers-by shewed no excitement, but passed on without taking any notice? If I am not very much mistaken, you would be excited about it yourself." And I only wonder there is not *more* "excitement" amongst us as to these all-important matters. Time, looked at in the light of eternity, bears a very different aspect from that in which it is generally considered.

IX. "Does not the coffee-room take away the men from their homes?"

Ask among our cottages here if this is the effect. No. On the contrary, it *re*-creates the feeling of home-love already lost, or poisoned through the fatal influences of the public-house. In a better atmosphere the men learn to *value* the treasures God has given them as they never did before, and if you will make a tour of inspection through our rooms on any night in the week, you will see that by far the largest proportion of those who spend the evenings amongst us are *single men.* Those who have *no* home-ties, of course, are in the streets if they are not in the beer-house. But here they have a refuge; and they love the place as if it were their home. Great numbers of married men also come in, but they do not come every evening, nor do they stay long at a time. "You see, Miss, I have got a *Missus* now," said a man at the station the other day apologetically, "but the coffee-room did beautiful for me when I was all alone—didn't it?" he said, turning to the Missus; "I used to write to you—don't you remember?" The wife smiled and said, "Yes, it was a rare comfort to him." "Kep' me out of mischief," he exclaimed. "Oh, dear me! I don't know what I *should* have done without it."

X. "Are you doing anything for the women?"

The women come in very large numbers to the

meetings with their husbands, or alone, while the husband "minds the children" at home. They also spend Thursday evening in the coffee-room, if they like, after the meeting that is held in the adjoining room; and they may always come in any day or hour, as customers. We have a mothers' meeting also every Monday afternoon, where material is sold, and they bring their own work. A story is read to them, hymns sung, and the Bible read and commented on. The linsey, flannel, calico, &c., is sold on the spot by a tradesman, who has arranged to come every Monday afternoon, and serve out his own goods, sharing with me the penny reduction in every shilling. A lady sits by one of the tables, and writes in our book and on the women's cards every sum as it is paid in, and when the article is fully paid for, it may be taken home by the purchaser.

But, as my reader may well imagine, a large band of associated workers is required thus to enter *fully* into the needs of BOTH men and women. "Pray ye the Lord of the harvest, that He may send more labourers into the harvest."

XI. "What refreshments are sold at the counter in the coffee-room?"

Drinks.

Coffee.
Cocoa.
Tea.
Fruit Syrups of various kinds.
Lemonade.
Ginger Beer.
Gingerette, and others.

Food.

Bread and Butter.
Cakes of all descriptions.
Plum Cake and Seed Cake cut in slices.
Sausage Rolls.
Meat Pies.
Pastry of various kinds.
Cold Rice Pudding cut in slices.
Biscuits of every description.

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A sufficient meal of Bread and Butter, Bacon, and Egg, for 6d.

Cold Meat always ready, sold in 4d. or 6d. quantities.

Hot Sausages, 1½d.

German Sausages.

DINNERS.

Hot Joints every day, 6d. and 8d. plates.
Beefsteak Puddings, 4d. to 6d. each.
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Soup, 2d. a basin.
Pease Pudding, 1d.
Apple Pudding and Tarts, 1d.
Hot Rice Pudding, 1d.

XII. "Is it suitable that ladies should go amongst these men?"

In reply to this question, I have said enough to prove what my own experience has been, and will close my book with an account from Lord Shaftesbury's pen, which he has kindly given me for the purpose of insertion here.

"A few years ago, when visiting some of our Ragged Schools, I turned into one which was situated at the time in a district as terrible and as degraded and dangerous as any in the whole metropolis. Though it was not during school hours, I went up-stairs to the large room in the hope of finding the superintendent. He was, however, absent on important business. Instead of the superintendent, I saw a large number of men and lads, from the ages of seventeen to forty, sitting in a circle round a young woman, whom I *knew* to be the daughter of a comfortable trades-

man in the neighbourhood. She was engaged in reading to them, and asking them questions. The men were among the most wild and savage I ever saw. Some had no shirts, some no shoes; all were untrimmed, with long hair, unshaven, and altogether fierce and reckless in appearance. Yet their attention was striking; they sat, eyes and mouths open, listening to the words of this young woman, who was under thirty years of age, and singularly pretty. No one could mistake the feelings of the men—they were the feelings of earnest gratitude and reverential affection, such as are exhibited by those who, for the first time in their lives, are brought under the influence of true and well-guided piety, and disinterested love.

"Here it is where women are vastly superior to men in the power of reaching the hearts of the most lawless and dishonoured.

"I saw at once the extraordinary command of this young woman over that awful company, nevertheless I entertained misgivings; and on going down stairs, I said to the superintendent, who had returned, 'I have just seen our friend Miss W—— quite alone, no one to protect her, and in the middle of a set of roughs, of which I have never seen the like. I confess I am alarmed.' 'And so am I,' said he. 'Why, then,' I replied, 'do you leave her there?' 'Oh, it is plain,' he

said, 'that our fears are very different. You are afraid lest some of those men should hurt her, and that is impossible; but I fear lest some one coming in for the first time, and as yet untaught, might take some liberty, or offer her some affront —I tell you those fellows would tear him limb from limb, he would never leave the place alive.'

"This admirable and loveable creature died about two years after, and a leaf was cut out of her journal bearing these words:—

'Servants of the Lord most high,
Catch the moments—as they fly.'

It was sent me as a memorial of her."

Yet a little while in storm and tempest,
Then we reach the shore;
Battle fierce and wild a little moment,
Rest, for evermore.

Yet a little while in sin and sorrow,
Then the sinless heaven;
Yet a little while the weary prison,
Then the bars are riven.

Then no longer is the mist around us
Of distrust and fear,
Then we shall not need that He should tell us
That He standeth near.

Light amidst our darkness is the knowledge
  Of that day to come ;
Little heed we that our feet are weary,
  We are going home.

Home unto the splendour of the city,
  Saviour, where Thou art ;
Home, into the sweetness of Thy presence
  Never to depart.

One by one His scattered sheep are gathered,
  From the wastes of sin ;
Fear not, weakest, vilest of His ransomed,
  He will lead thee in.

Tenderly He dealeth, ever mindful
  That we are but dust ;
Sweet it is to close our weary eyelids,
  Silently to TRUST.

Spirit ! Comforter amidst our sorrows,
  Teach us more of HIM !
Even now His glory dwells amongst us,
  But our eyes are dim.

Christ, the Light of the eternal ages,
  Of the heavenly day,
Thou art now our light, and now our glory,
  On our pilgrim way.

Thus we must ever labour together,—one with the Lord, and one with His people,—and as we labour, rejoice. For the labour and rejoicing alike we have a twofold motive, and a twofold reward.

Let us labour,—

1st. Because He has lived, and worked, and died for us.

2d. Because with believing efforts success must follow, and that, no doubt, in proportion to the faith and diligence combined.

Let us rejoice,—

1st. Because "the joy of the Lord is our strength."

2d. Because we are *commanded* to "rejoice alway;" and in obeying so blessed a phase of our Lord's will, we have in our hearts the foretaste of an eternal joy, the happiness of present success, a secret of divine strength, and the honour of presenting daily our Saviour's gospel in its brightest and most attractive light. The labour and the joy thus most blessedly intertwine, each resulting in the deepening, strengthening, and increase of the other; and in such obedience to the Father's will, a holy love uniting each separate link of this wondrous chain, souls will be brought into the intercourse of reconciliation with *the* Father and the Son, while the anointing oil

of the life-giving and sustaining Spirit, the Comforter, will consecrate with true value a life thus yielded in simple prayer and praise to our God.

ADDENDA.

ARCHDEACON PHILPOTT writes to this effect, with regard to the results arising from a vigilant inspection of public-houses, with, at the same time, the formation of a Total Abstinence Society in the parish of Kirk-Andrews, on the north coast of the Isle of Man, during his residence there. I have in his own words the following brief account of the means used for the attainment of this end, so singularly successful in its results :—

"1. Establishing the Total Abstinence Society.

"2. Visiting the public-houses through the whole parish every night of the parish fairs, of which there were *twelve* yearly; and refusing to sign the applications for ~~removal~~ renewal of license when drunkenness and disorder were detected.

"3. Getting the number of the fairs reduced from *twelve* a-year to *one* a-year.

"There were originally thirty public-houses in the parish. Out of these only two were left, and these soon were closed for want of custom.

"The whole history of Manx drunkenness, and its delivery from it forty-five years ago, is one of the most striking histories on record; but Abstinence Societies, of which I established the first in 1828, and the suppression of fairs and public-houses, were the *principal* means of this reformation."

August, 1876.

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